



THIS CHANCE OF NOBLE DEEDS.



*A. T. Newsbury.*

# THIS CHANCE OF NOBLE DEEDS.

THE LIFE RECORD OF  
JOHN V. B. SHREWSBURY.

BY HIS SON,  
H. W. SHREWSBURY

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“From scheme and creed the light goes out,  
The saintly fact survives ;  
The blessed Master none can doubt  
Revealed in holy lives.”

—*Whittier.*

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TO MY  
FATHER'S GRANDCHILDREN  
THIS RECORD OF A NOBLE LIFE IS  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

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"Shewing mercy unto a thousand generations of them that love Me and keep My commandments."—Exodus xx. 6 (R.V. margin).

"I do believe that God will save all my children, yea, and grandchildren also. But that does not suffice me. I ask for His mercy, His covenant mercy in Christ, to be established with my posterity for all generations, even till the Son of Man shall come in His glory." (From a letter by the Rev. W. J. Shrewsbury to his son John).



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# THIS CHANCE OF NOBLE DEEDS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE HOME IN KAFFIR LAND.

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TABLE MOUNTAIN bay at length. The stormy voyage had lasted three months. There were no seventeen-day passages, and steam-boat saloons for outgoing missionaries in 1826. But enthusiasm for missions ran high in Methodist circles. Congregations gave freely of their treasure, and brave men and women gave themselves. Of such were the young Missionary and his girl-wife, for whom now the splash of the anchor made music indeed, and the curve of the shore, and the white buildings gleaming in the sunshine of an April day, and the bold outlines of the flat-topped mountain a vision of beauty.

The Missionary's name was already familiar throughout England—William James Shrewsbury. He had narrowly escaped martyrdom by mob violence in Barbados. The utter demolition of the chapel, the wrecking of the preacher's house, and destruction of his furniture, and, worst of all, of his library, had formed the subject of an animated debate in the House of Commons. Ministers and prominent members of the House had condemned

the outrage, and borne testimony to the noble character and true service of the Missionary. He was still in his early years. He had passed his thirty-first birthday on board. His wife was the daughter of a West Indian architect, and sister to Dr. W. J. King, whose death all Barbados mourned in 1851. She was but twenty-three. She had joined the Methodist Society when in her teens, to the annoyance of her family, for it was a small society and despised. One of its truest and most active members was a mulatto woman. And in this girl of gentle birth and intense religious zeal the Missionary found a wife whose affections and courage endured without a murmur mob violence, and stormy voyages, and the stern discipline of rough and perilous pioneer mission work. They had two children with them, a merry two-year-old boy and a girl baby. Well might the Missionary fix his eager gaze upon the shore; behind that mountain stretched a vast region to which he was to carry the first tidings of a world's Saviour. His soul burned with holy impatience. Well might the young mother fasten curious eyes upon the little town nestling under the mountain. This must be, she knew, the birthplace of her third child. And then, God willing, she was ready to take her little ones and go with her husband beyond the utmost pale of civilised life.

“August 31, 1826. This morning, at half-past five, God added to my family mercies by giving to me a third child, and a second son. May my John Vincent Brainerd be wholly and for ever



REV. W. J. SHREWSBURY, ÆTAT 30.



the Lord's. Amen." That is the exact entry, neither more nor less, in the Missionary's Journal for the date given. But private letters supplement the Journal, in which the writer rarely allows himself to turn aside from his record of missionary toil to note in even the briefest terms events of merely domestic interest. In correspondence with close friends he unbends a little, and a glimpse is given of a room in the old Mission House at Cape Town, and of the husband kneeling by his young wife's bedside in the early morning, and pouring out his soul in fervent thanksgiving for a life so precious spared to him, and in earnest prayer that this fair blue-eyed babe born on African soil—this missionary child—might live to achieve greatness in the Lord's service.

On the 17th of September following the child was taken to the Cape Town Wesleyan Chapel. This building had formerly been a canteen, and the very spot where Barnabas Shaw stood when he took the little one in his arms and baptized him formed in earlier days the bar. "John Vincent Brainerd, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The curious initials, J. V. B. S., have been familiar in later Methodism, and have puzzled many, so much so that once, at least, a letter was delivered through the post to the Rev. Alphabet Shrewsbury. But the names were well chosen, and the child who received them rejoiced to the end of his days that the veteran Missionary, Barnabas Shaw, baptized him; that the act took place in a transformed drinking saloon

(pledge of future triumphs); and that God had fulfilled the petitions offered that day by putting within him the devout spirit of John Vincent, his father's friend and pastor in boyhood, and of the Missionary Brainerd.

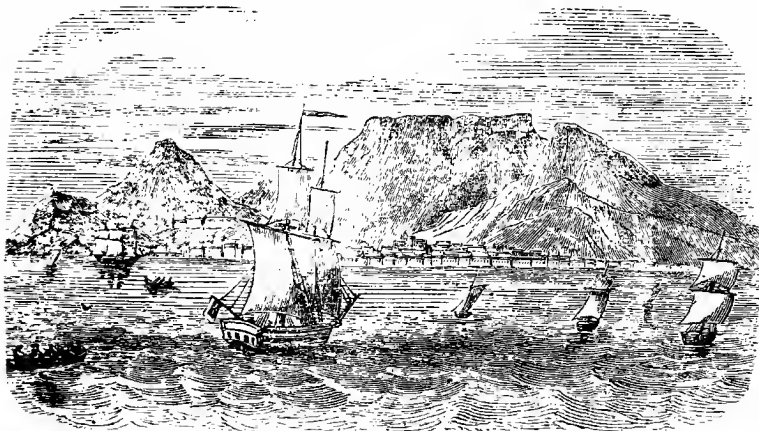
And now the time was ripe for the Missionary Shrewsbury to take up that rough and toilsome mission work on which his heart was set. The state of affairs at Cape Town at that period was not altogether satisfactory. A clear head and a firm hand were needed to guide the infant Methodist Church of South Africa through perils that beset it. Barnabas Shaw greatly desired to retain the young Missionary at headquarters. It was an honourable and important position, but he would not accept it. "We have never been a self-seeking family," he wrote in later years, when counselling his son about an appointment. So the Missionary and his wife, with the two children who had crossed the sea, and baby John, first of their five Africans, turned their back upon civilisation. A quick voyage of three days brought the family to Algoa Bay; then followed a five days' journey, by ox waggon, to Graham's Town, and forward again, after a week's sojourn in that then oasis in the wilderness, to Wesleyville. At this little settlement the Missionary left his wife and children under the protection of native chiefs, whilst he journeyed further some 150 miles N.W. to treat with the Kaffir Chief Hintsa for the establishment of a Mission Station at his Kraal. The negotiations were difficult and tedious on account of the envy and jealousies of neighbouring

Chiefs. The Missionary's ardour decided the matter. After a delay of some months, without waiting for Hintsa's consent, he removed his wife and family to a spot by the river near Hintsa's Kraal. On the 4th of June, 1827, he began to build a cottage. In a week it was finished, and the family left the ox waggon and took possession. And this rudely built hut, overlooking an African river, 300 miles away from the nearest white man's dwelling, became John V. B. Shrewsbury's first settled home. This hut was the nucleus of a little settlement. A chapel was built a few months later, and the Mission Station was named Butterworth, in memory of Joseph Butterworth, the recently deceased Secretary of the Wesleyan Foreign Missionary Society. The Mission continued to grow, and was becoming a flourishing station, when in the Kaffir war a few years later it was totally destroyed by fire.

But shadowy pictures remained in later years of this African boyhood, and scanty indeed are the materials available for filling in the outlines. The Missionary's voluminous journals and correspondence contain the briefest and barest allusions to events of domestic interest or to the character of his surroundings. That his first home should be a mere plastered hut ; that his wife was the only white woman in all that vast district ; that there were only little black boys for his children's playmates ; that he must leave his family for days and weeks together whilst going from kraal to kraal ; that on occasions when medical aid was absolutely necessary it could only be obtained by putting the

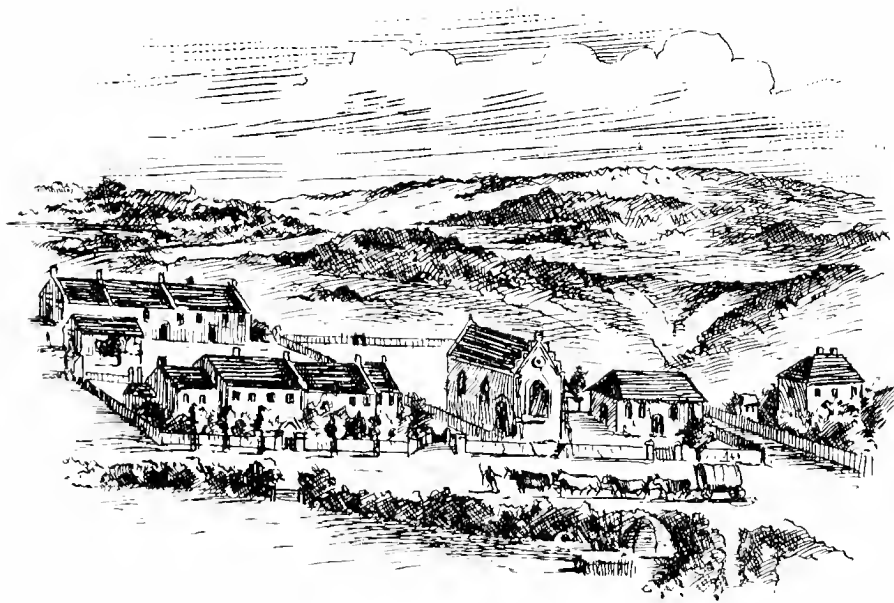


whole family into the lumbering ox waggon, and making a toilsome journey to distant Graham's Town; these, and a multitude of other details, were looked upon as the natural conditions of a Missionary's life, and beneath notice in a Missionary's record of his work. But a few things left a lasting impression upon the boy's mind. That mission waggon, with its long team of oxen, was never forgotten, and especially the nights spent in it when the oxen were out-spanned, and the fires blazed up all around, and the watchful Hottentots crouched in the glow, and the lad slept peacefully, though wild beasts lurked near, because, better than the watch-fires and Hottentots' guns, upon a mat stretched on the earth beneath the waggon floor, lay his father. Memories he had, too, of peaches and prickly pears and melons gathered without stint. And a recollection of roasted caterpillars, which, when done to a turn, his little sister received in her pinafore, with the result on one occasion that her clothes caught fire, and weeks of agony followed the terrible burns. Against these dim impressions of early years two events stood out in clear relief. The one a visit from his father, and the first awakening of spiritual desires. The Missionary's elder children had been placed in a school at Salem, a small town just within the then frontier of the colony. Here on rare occasions, by long journeys on horseback, their father visited them. On this particular occasion John was four years old. But he remembered well that on the Sunday his father preached from the text, "God is Love," and the next day, just before



CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, IN 1826.

*(From an old print).*



SALEM, SOUTH AFRICA.

JOHN V. B. SHREWSBURY'S FIRST SCHOOL.

*(From an old print).*



he mounted his horse, the preacher took his two little boys on his knees and talked to them about God's love. "Then there came up in my soul a wish to love so good a God."

The other event was the boy's first great trouble, and it left an indelible stamp upon both memory and character. He was nearing his ninth birthday, a sturdy lad, full of fun and frolic, and brimful of affection for his gentle mother. And on the 13th of June, of that year (1835) she died. Never could he forget that Sunday when he was taken into the room in the Graham's Town Mission House where his dead mother lay, and the kiss he printed upon her unresponsive lips, his boyish heart bursting meanwhile with grief. I, who write these words, sixty-three years later, have before me on the page a tress of her exquisitely soft dark brown hair, and I call to mind, how even in old age, on the rare occasions when my father spoke of that sorrow, it was with faltering voice, and eyes ready to overflow. Some of the holiest impulses of his life, and much that was noblest and most tender in his character, may be traced back to the influence of his mother during those years of home life in Kaffirland. What she was cannot be better expressed than in the Rev. W. J. Shrewbury's description of what an ideal Missionary's wife should be. The extract is from one of a long series of letters addressed by the Missionary to the Rev. George Jackson. She should have in addition to all ordinary virtues, "A rare ardour of spirit, a quenchless zeal for the salvation of sinners, and

especially a longing desire for the conversion of the heathen." Again, "it is desirable that his wife should be healthful, and capable of bearing a good measure of hardship and fatigue, as well as ready to practice self-denial in every possible way, and willing to forego the comforts, and if called thereto even some of the necessities of life. If she cannot do without frequently reclining on a sofa, how will she be able at night to lie on a little grass on the bare ground? If she cannot be comfortable without a smelling bottle ready at hand, how will she meet storms and tempests without fainting? A healthy, cheerful, contented woman, who can thrive on bread and water, will be comforting to her husband in the midst of privation and wants, when a person of another cast would greatly aggravate his troubles by bemoaning along with him their destitution of comforts in the wilderness."

Such a wife the Missionary who penned these words found, and precious as she was to him as a wife, she was not less so to her children as a mother. She gave up, without a murmur, everything—home, friends, comfort, for the sake of Christ's kingdom, and when on that sad June day the young mother, still in her 34th year only, breathed her last, her premature death was the sacrifice of herself for Missions.

But oh! the pitifulness of that voyage home. That terrible voyage of eleven long weeks in the little brig. Well might the boy remember it. And especially he remembered the woman-like tenderness with which his sorrow-stricken father cared for

him and his six brothers and sisters. By day he watched over them with unremitting attention. At sundown, when the slanting rays made a radiant pathway across the darkening waters, he would take the little ones on his knees, and grouping the rest about him teach them to sing Bishop Heber's lines :—

“ Waft, waft ye winds His story,  
And you ye waters roll,  
Till like a sea of glory  
It spreads from pole to pole.”

And when at length the children drooped with weariness, the father weary also, undressed them and laid them in their berth ; then afterwards on deck, in the waning light of the evening, as well as the motion of the vessel permitted, he would write down on odd scraps of paper, for the easing of his heart, the consolatory thoughts and lessons of grace that came to him in those days of anguish. Then when the stars came out he went below, and lay through the night on the cabin floor in the midst of his children. Of sleep he had little, for the youngest was but a year old, and the eldest under twelve. And often in the night the boy John saw his father rise to soothe the fears or minister to the wants of the crying children.

A long and weary voyage ! but at last the boy's eager eyes saw the white cliffs of Dover, and the home in Kaffirland became a dream of other days.



## CHAPTER II.

### WITH THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS.

---

THE Wesleyan Methodist Conference of 1824 assembled at Leeds. Dr. Newton was the President for the first of the four occasions on which he filled the office. In the afternoon of August 4th, from three to five o'clock, the Conference held an open Session. The interest of that service was divided between the platform and the front pews of the gallery. Dr. Newton, president; Henry Moore, ex-president; Charles Atmore, Joseph Entwistle, R. Reece, John Gardiner, J. Edmondson, Jabez Bunting, former presidents, and especially the venerable James Wood, tenth president from Wesley, and now in the fifty-first year of his ministry—these made a platform the public might well gaze upon with interest. The gallery presented a curious contrast. Seventy lads, fresh-faced, bright-eyed, and all dressed alike, looked down with eager interest upon the venerable fathers of Methodism. They not only looked upon them, they addressed them. It was an open Session. From their lofty point of vantage three of the lads delivered orations in English, three in Latin, and one actually harangued President, ex-Presidents, and the whole Conference in Greek. The lads came from Woodhouse Grove School, one of the two establishments maintained by the Connexion for the

training of minister's sons. The young Missionary Shrewsbury listened delighted. Had he not himself a year-old boy, and was it not natural that there should float before him a vision of his Jeremiah, a bright, rosy-cheeked lad, like that young orator addressing the Conference in measured sentences of classical Greek? The sight of those young faces opposite to the beardless divines on the platform stirred the fatherly feelings of the preachers. Some recognized their own boys in that living Septuagint. Many hoped to fill their places from their own stock. This is the record of an eye-witness, penned that same year whilst the spell of Conference was still upon him : "The boys looked charmingly. I never saw a more moving scene than while the boys stood up and delivered the appointed orations ; so many fathers among the preachers looking on their sons, and then hiding their tears as much as possible, which they could not restrain. It was a deeply interesting time."

To the Missionary the occasion was so interesting that he took the opportunity of visiting Woodhouse Grove, some six miles distant from Leeds, that he might see for himself the training ground of these sons of the prophets. What he saw deepened the impression. Nine years later he returned from Africa, a widower with seven children, and straightway sent two of his boys under the safe conduct of the Rev. William Shaw, to the Grove School. A little later their younger brother joined them, and in all the school there were no merrier and more frolicsome lads, nor any more conscientious, than



Jerry and Jack and Joe. Sons of the prophets, those Grove lads, but full of animal spirits, and despite heredity, possessed of a large admixture of the old Adam. What games they had ! What lawless outbursts they fell into ! Pranks by day, as when they locked themselves in a room with an unpopular and incompetent teacher, and one lad, jumping upon his back and clinging for dear life, rode him up and down, and round and round, until the poor man was ready to drop with fatigue, and, when he escaped, quitted both room and school in sheer disgust. Pranks by night, as when a boy, on the eve of Committee day, when the pantry was stocked with good things, stole quietly down, but being surprised by the governor's wife, fled along the corridor, and finding himself at the end in a trap, leaped into a flour tub ; then when he espied signs of uneasiness on the lady's part at his mysterious disappearance, and an evident suspicion of his objective reality, jumped out of the tub, and followed the retreating figure with a steady and deliberate pit-pat, pit-pat, until the lady fairly took to her heels, and vanished into her room, exclaiming, under her breath, "Lord, what have I seen?" Yes, they were frolicsome lads, and John Shrewsbury was as high-spirited and fond of fun as any of them. But there was in him an even good temper, a readiness to oblige, a quickness to learn, and a steadiness of application that made him a favourite with teachers and schoolfellows alike. One stand-up fight he had, but it was with a big bully, to deliver from his

clutches a small victim. Of religious feeling he had but little during these schooldays. But some of his friends were boys of intense conviction, and their influence told upon him for good. One who in later years entered the same ministry, and remained a life-friend, constantly found the five minutes allowed for evening prayer too short. When the signal was given for rising he would remain still upon his knees, and taunts and slippers would be hurled at him by irreverent companions. Once a missile struck him on the head, and he jumped up hurriedly, exclaiming, "Wait a bit, Lord, till I've whopped that fellow." Then, having administered a good drubbing to the offender, returned to the bedside and prayed on in peace. For John the five minutes' allowance was ample. Yet there were times when conscience, smote him, and tender yearnings stirred within his heart. In such moments he would creep under a desk, and from that hiding-place pray to his dead mother—the sainted young mother, resting afar off in her African grave—to help him. And only God and the desk knew the bitter tears that the boy, broken down by tender memories, shed there.

During the first part of their school-life the brothers were cut off from home. Their father was appointed for some months to Boulogne, and after that to the Chatham Circuit. And for all practical purposes the distance from Leeds to Chatham in 1837 was as great as in these days from Leeds to Rome. Their uncle came over from Barbados to Glasgow during that period, and purposed visiting

his brother-in-law at Chatham, but having got as far as Leeds, and seen the lads at Woodhouse Grove, he found the journey too toilsome to carry through, and returned by water from Hull to Leith, and so back again by Glasgow to the West Indies. It was as painful to the father as to his sons to be so long separated. He wrote to the Governor, in view of approaching holidays, begging him to ascertain the coach fare for the lads to come home. The reply was that the cost from Leeds to London, exclusive of meals by the way, would be £3 10s. od. for each lad. As a cheaper route, he suggested coaching to Hull, and sailing from that port to Gravesend. But even this was beyond the preacher's scanty stipend, and the boys remained therefore during the holidays under the kind care of Governor Morley and his wife. It was hard, but it was harder still when John fell sick; erysipelas seized him, and for a time it seemed as if the sickness would prove fatal. The unremitting care and motherly tenderness of Mrs. Morley saved him. For three weeks she scarcely left the boy for an hour. It was at this time that John's father married again. The lads sent a quaint message home through the Governor, begging him to give their love and duty to their new mother; they would have said something about her in their last letter, but they did not know what to say. However, they now desired to thank their father for providing them such a mother, and were sure when they saw and knew her they would love her very much. And so it was. They were devoted sons, and years later, after their father's death, John

took his stepmother to his own home, and cheered the sorrowful years of her widowhood with kindest sympathy.

But if during these years home visits were impossible, there was the compensation of constant and full correspondence. I print with some hesitation, for long communications are burdensome to short biographies, a letter received by John from his father on his tenth birthday. An old-time perfume, delicate and sweet, lingers about it; moreover, it lays bare, as nothing else could, those home influences which had so much to do with the fashioning of the lad's character, and presents the Missionary, whose visage to the world often appeared stern, in that gracious and beautiful aspect which made him so lovable to those who knew him intimately.

Brompton, near Rochester,

August 31st, 1836.

My Dear John,

You are this day ten years old, which will be a seventh part of your whole life, should you live to be seventy years of age. Ten years ago I first held you in my arms at the Cape of Good Hope, and by your ever-dear mother's bedside offered up prayer both for her and you. Now she is gone, and in my solitude I pray for you alone. May Almighty God bless my son John all his days, that every 31st of August may be a joyful season, and may he dwell with God for ever in his kingdom.

Just as your Mama expired, looking at me she said, "Take care of the children." I now think of her words, and you must hear her speaking to you in this letter, as I write it in remembrance of her dying charge. Imagine that she is by you and addressing you in these lines. "John," she would say, "be sure to meet me in heaven. Listen to your father's advice, to whose care I have committed you all. Fear and love God, and love one another; flee from sin and follow Jesus Christ, and then the day of your death will be better than even the day of your birth, for it will be your entrance into life everlasting." These, my dear boy, were your mother's wishes while living, from the day she first nourished you with the breast until the end of her earthly existence, and they are still her wishes in another world, and with them my desires also correspond. Make us both happy by remembering your "Creator in the days of your youth," and so God will not forsake you in riper years, or in the maturity of old age.

This is a fit season to remind you once more of the injunction I laid upon you both, to retire for private prayer every morning, *a quarter before nine*; at least as near that time as your School Regulations will allow, and be sure that you be punctual every day. With the reason for selecting this hour you are well acquainted. It is of great importance that you should now be brought to love private prayer. If you have not a room, it will not be impossible to find some spot

or some method of praying unobserved, if your heart delight therein ; for as the proverb says, “ where there is a will there is a way.” I often look back with pleasure on the time I spent in prayer when a child, and only regret that I did not pray more frequently and more earnestly. Oftentimes the evil heart would prefer play to prayer ; but that must make you still more determined to retire, and convince you of the great necessity of praying that a heart so sinful may be made new. Oh, my John, I do indeed want to know that you thus delight yourself in the Lord, for then He will most assuredly “ satisfy you early ” “ with His mercy, so that you shall rejoice and be glad in Him all your days.” Who can tell, in the midst of so many changes that happen, what will be your lot, or where your dwelling in future life ? But if you have a praying heart it will be always well with you ; and at present you are just in the place to get such a heart, and it will be your own fault if you do not obtain it at Woodhouse Grove. I will not burthen you with a number of different instructions at one time ; this only do I require of you, that from your tenth year you become a child of prayer. And I now say to Jeremiah what I say to you.

Be steady and diligent at your books ; the bee fills her hive with honey by being always employed.

We are all well, and have a comfortable and pleasant house at Brompton ; and all unite in

love to, and prayer for, you both. Present my respects to Mr. and Mrs. Morley.

I am, my dear John,  
Your affectionate Father,  
W. J. SHREWSBURY.

In 1838 Mr. Shrewsbury removed to Bradford, and his sons had the keen joy of frequent visits home. Yet once John wished rather to tarry at school. His home-coming was fixed for December 14th. On the 15th there was to be a party at the Grove, and roast goose. John begged to remain for it. But the unbending Puritanism of his father could not recognize in this "carnal desire" a reason for postponing his return. If there had been a Christian reason to assign he would not have objected, but he would feel ashamed to tell the Governor the real reason—John's desire to eat goose. "It may seem but a little matter, yet it involves a weighty principle : learn in youth to correct a desire for luxuries ; self-denial and a holy indifference about food, so long as it is clean and wholesome become everyone who seeks to be like Jesus Christ."

John's school term was now at an end. But his excellent conduct and untiring industry had won him so much esteem that an extra year was granted, and he was the first lad at Woodhouse Grove to receive this mark of honour. During that year his thoughts were turning to useful service, he was interesting himself in urging the then new-fangled principle of total abstinence, and he was

prime mover in annual exhibitions held in behalf of Foreign Missions. The following is his exhibition circular :—

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WOODHOUSE  
GROVE EXHIBITION.

We, the Committee of the Woodhouse Grove Exhibition, most respectfully solicit your attention and support to the aforesaid Exhibition, which will be opened on the 19th of August, 1840.

Paintings, Curiosities—Natural and Artificial, &c., &c., will be thankfully received by

J V B. Shrewsbury,	J. Raby,
J. B. Wilson,	G. Allen,
W. Clough,	J. Lewis.

N.B.—After defraying the expenses of the Exhibition, the remainder of the money will be dedicated to the Missions.

And now school-days were done. The question of a trade for the lad was on the carpet, when there came a request from a gentleman in the Isle of Man, that the Woodhouse Grove Committee would furnish from the senior scholars a young man to coach his only son. There would be no doubt as to the selection. John Shrewsbury was chosen, and he passed with a pure record from the sons of the prophets to face the wide world.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE BOY TUTOR.

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WHAT could be the matter with the lad? He had left the dining table with a brief apology, and hurried from the room. He was a strong active boy, full of high spirits, and quite at ease in the Manchester home of his father's friends. Something clearly was weighing upon his mind. And little wonder. A less courageous lad than John Shrewsbury would have broken down altogether. He was barely fourteen, and already he was beginning to feel the burden of a man's work and responsibilities. School-days were over. He had left home, and after this brief visit he was going forth to carve his own niche in the world. He was on his way to the Isle of Man to become a private tutor. A private tutor, and himself only fourteen! It was a brave thing to attempt. In after years it seemed to him a foolish thing. As he sat at the table the meaning of it all came to him; the complete separation from home, the uncertainty as to his fitness for the position he would have to fill, the difficulties to be faced, the responsibilities; and especially the thought came to him that he had no religious experience to rest upon, and louder than the conversation of his friends, an inward and divine voice seemed to say, "You have left your father's roof; what will you

do if I am not your Father?" A storm of emotion swept the lad's soul, and hurrying from the table to his own room he flung himself upon his knees and cried, "My Father, be Thou the Guide of my youth."

The pale-faced lad, in a short jacket, put ashore at Douglas in the early morning after a tempestuous crossing of some fourteen hours, hardly looked an ideal tutor. But he took up his duties boldly, and soon won the respect of his pupil and the affection of the parents. All the island was ringing just then with the fame of a Mrs. Turnbull. She was a woman with a mission, and her mission was nothing less than to empty the Douglas pulpits. She had commenced at the Methodist Chapel the Sunday before John Shrewsbury arrived. At her peremptory summons the astonished preacher forsook his post, and standing in his place she poured forth a wild oration. It was quickly cut short, and the burly arms of the stewards dragged the woman away from the pulpit lamp brackets, to which she clung desperately. The excitement of those discussions, the novelty of his surroundings, and the pressure of a busy life, fully occupied the boy-tutor's thoughts, and for awhile his religious impressions lay dormant, for a short period only. Within a few weeks the mother of his pupil fell sick, and her sickness was incurable. There was living in Douglas at that time a woman named Ellen Brannan. She earned a scanty living by taking in mangling. But she was one of those poor of this world whom God hath chosen rich in faith. She

had a wonderful gift in prayer, and far and wide she was called by rich and poor alike to their bedside when sick or dying. On one of her visits she saw the boy tutor, and her heart warmed to him at once. His pupil was not easy to control, the illness of the lady weighed upon him, and the lad was home-sick. The bright open face, with its frank blue eyes, wore a cloud. The good woman took the lad's hand in her own; "Dear boy," she said, with simple directness, "are you happy in the love of Jesus?" His confidence was won on the spot. He laid bare his soul to the humble saint, and that same day, in response to her gentle exhortation, he gave himself unreservedly to God. But it was dawn-light only yet. The next Sunday evening his new friend found him in the chapel praying earnestly within himself at the after-meeting, and whispered to him in passing, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom." Early the next morning, whilst reading his Bible, the words came to him, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then the full light of day broke. The lad's first thought was to share his new-found joy with his father. He scribbled a few lines hastily in pencil, and sent them off by the first post, and that the thrill of gladness with which the lad scrawled those few lines thrilled equally the father's heart, is clear from the brief but significant entry in the Missionary's Journal:—"July 28th, 1841. Heard good tidings from son John, whom God hath set at liberty."

The lad's mind had been well prepared for the godly advice and sweet influence of this mother in Israel, by the wise and tender counsels of his father when he left home. The following extracts are from a long letter of instructions he received immediately after settling in the Isle of Man ; a letter reverently and lovingly preserved to the end of his days.

*Instructions for my son, John Vincent  
Brainerd Shrewsbury.*

Bradford, Yorkshire,  
April 17, 1841.

My dear Son,—

I. As to piety. Get deep religion. Do not rest in desires, but pray earnestly for pardon, regeneration, and holiness. Keep out of company. Pray in secret *many times* every day.

II. As to health. Rise early, but never sit up late at night. Drink water. Keep your Total Abstinence Pledge. Never be laughed out of it, nor reasoned out of it. Keep it, and you will keep your health, your money, your morals, your reputation, and your religion.

III. As to studies. The Bible is the first book. Touch no book till you have read a portion of the word of God.

IV As to behaviour. Be a plain, simple, unaffected gentleman. A well-bred Englishman is the best behaved man in the world. Be content, if it ever accidentally happen that in any little matters you should be overlooked. This does us good ; we are all proud by nature, and that which

tends to humble us must prove beneficial, if we have only wisdom and grace to turn it to a good account.

V. As to your duties as a Tutor. First of all depend on God for wisdom ; and whenever you are at a loss, make it known to Him in prayer : James i. 5. Secondly, study your pupil's disposition, and endeavour to make learning a pleasure, not a task. Get him accustomed to exercise his own mind, and rather put him into the method of discovering knowledge, than directly communicate it.

And now, my dear John, I think I have given you such advice as will be serviceable to you, and without enlarging, I will conclude by commending you to the merciful care of that good God who hath fed me all my life long, and been my Father and my Friend from my earliest days. We can mutually meet every day at the throne of grace ; and by us you will be constantly remembered when we are bowing before the Lord. O may you live and die a thorough Christian, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. I desire nothing more.

And shall ever remain,

My dear Son,

Your affectionate Father,

WILLIAM J. SHREWSBURY.

Eastbrook, Chapel House,

*Saturday morning.*

P.S.—Write me regularly *the first day* of every month, unless it fall on the Sabbath, and

then write the day following. Never learn to smoke or take snuff: two foolish and wasteful habits.

\* \* \* \* \*

Happy boy! to be the recipient of counsels so wise and kind; happy father! whose son cherished them so lovingly, and followed them so loyally.

By the advice of his new friend the young tutor, immediately upon his conversion, began to visit the sick and poor. The saint of the mangle was deeply versed in the mysteries of spiritual life; she knew well that to put the light under a bushel was the surest way not only of hiding it, but of extinguishing it also. In her own extensive visitation she had become familiar with many haunts of sorrow, and she put her young friend at once in touch with families to whom he could carry welcome messages of hope and comfort. For such work as this a letter of his father's had prepared him. "The best College for a minister of the Gospel," he wrote, "is to be found in the garrets and cellars of God's sick and poor."

It would seem that already a vague impression was forming in the boy's mind that some day he would find his life's work in preaching the Gospel. In after years, when that desire had become fulfilled, there was no part of his work which he discharged with more signal success than that of a sick visitor. A faithful preacher, a perfect chairman, a genius at organization, he was above and beyond all, at his very best in his ministrations to the sick and sorrowing. In Ellen Brannan's school he learned

lessons of incalculable value. The spirit of loving service which glorified this humble character rested in double portion upon her pupil, and throughout the long years of his ministry his presence in the sick chamber invariably carried a benediction.

Some of the cases the young tutor met with at this period left an ineffaceable impression upon his mind. One instance determined for him for life the reality of a Divine providence and the efficacy of prayer. He visited a poor woman completely disabled with rheumatism, and living alone in a little cottage. She had been a dressmaker, but her crippled hands had long since made her work impossible. One frosty morning the boy tutor found the woman radiant with joy. The night before her store of coals had given out. She warmed and chafed her aching limbs by the dying embers ; then as the room grew colder, and the feeble glow in the grate was almost gone, she betook herself to her only resource—prayer. She put before the Lord her crippled and helpless condition, and her need, above all, of warmth. It was two o'clock in the morning. There came a knock at the unbarred door, and the next moment a gentleman entered, carrying a basket of coals. "I have brought you these coals," he said. "I could not rest in my bed thinking you might be in want of them." The cripple was full of thanksgiving, and as the young man listened to her story the fact of Divine providence was driven home, and he saw in this experience an illustration never to be forgotten of the words, "Before they call I will answer."







THE BOILED BIBLE.

Another of the characters he visited was the postman, the "praying postman" was his nickname. Everybody knew him, and everybody knew his trouble—a blind wife, and a terrible virago to boot. She cursed his life. When she found him at prayer she would drag him from his knees by his hair. On one occasion, coming home from a round of fifty miles, she placed before her weary and hungry husband for supper his boiled Bible, sodden through and through with long stewing. The poor man, in utter anguish of soul, went down into the coal-cellar, the only safe retreat from his blind wife's fury, and there, said he to the young tutor, "As I cried to God I was filled to overflowing with the joy of the Lord." It was a wonderful lesson to the young man in Christian patience and fortitude. And in the long run, the invincible gentleness of the praying postman conquered his wife, and he had the joy of leading her a true penitent to God's House.

Unhappily the glow and beauty of these early experiences suffered eclipse for a season. The boy tutor fell into doubt, almost into despair. He wrote to his brother Joseph, who was still at the Grove School, and told him of the gloom that had fallen upon his soul. Joseph's reply I print at some length. To those who know him only through the *Memoirs* published in the *Methodist Family Library* it will be somewhat of a revelation. It betrays the very human element that existed in the writer's character. Yet in the eager entreaty of this self-styled unconverted boy, who begged his brother to

get re-converted at once, and in his naive confession that he had stolen his brother's envelopes and lied about the matter, it is easy to see fore-shadowed that saintly maturity of a few years later, which made the memory of the young doctor precious to all who knew him.

Woodhouse Grove, Rawdon, near Leeds.

Dear, very dear, Brother John,—

Having just perused your letter I have determined not to keep you in distress any longer than I can help, and for that reason I write immediately. I shall begin this time with the thing that affects me most. I opened your letter with emotions of joy, but I had not read far before you informed me that you had lost the grace of God. Now, although I am not converted myself, yet the anguish that that statement caused is inconceivable, for I felt as it were the anguish that you would yourself, because I felt for you as a brother. Now I have often heard father say that he that has back-slidden from God does more injury to the cause of God than the most immoral of the human race. That occurred to my mind immediately. O, I entreat you, if you would spare my feelings and your own, to get converted again. O, do, do, do, for God's sake. O how will father feel it. But, however, enough of this, as it hurts my feelings; but just this, if you do not inform me of your conversion in your next I shall feel it indeed, but do not deceive yourself and me by a false happiness, which I think St. James speaks of.

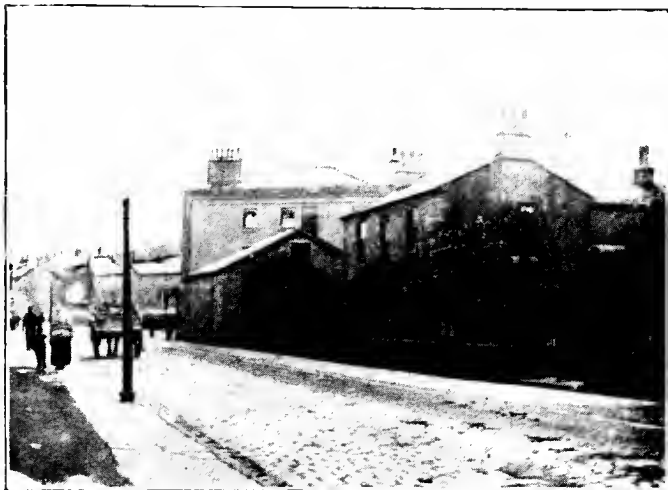
But now I make a confession which has pained me very much. When I left home I told you it was by mistake that I took your envelopes. Now that was a downright lie, and an enormous sin in the sight of God, and why did I do it? Surely my brother would not speak roughly to me if I asked him for them; oh no, he is too kind for that. I believe he would do almost anything for me, but do not think that I covet them now. I will send them all in my next, and I would do in this but I am afraid that the letter would be overweight, as this will, covered with one of the things which caused me to sin, and which caused the most poignant anguish; but, O forgive me, dear Brother, and I will never repeat the crime. But believe I never before coveted anything of yours, but that is no palliation of my crime.

The affectionate entreaty of Joseph was not in vain; the boy tutor set himself again to tread the path of life. His peace of soul, and joy in Christ-like service, came to him once more, and from that time to the end of his life he never lost the blessing.

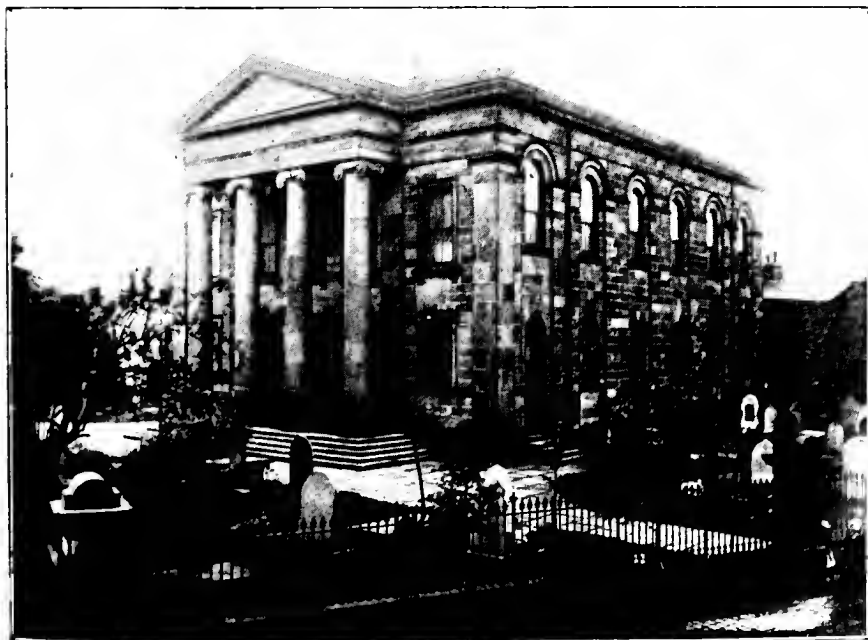
The tutor's duties were finished. His pupil had passed the stage of elementary tuition. He returned home. His father was now the second preacher in the Bacup Circuit. He was living in the preacher's house at Longholme, Rawtenstall. There was an opening for a small private school. The use of a room opposite the Chapel gates was obtained, and there for the next two years John Shrewsbury taught his brothers and sisters, and a

few other pupils. Three generations occupied the house. My grandfather's father and mother had come to live out the eventide of their life with him. Fifty years later, when Rawtenstall had been divided from Bacup, and made the head of a Circuit, my father became the Superintendent Minister, and again three generations met in the old parsonage. I was then the second preacher occupying the same house in which my father and grandfather and great-grandfather had lived before me, and people spoke to my children of the venerable appearance of their great-great-grandfather, and the quaint dress and the orthodox Methodist bonnet, with its white ribbon strings, of their great-great-grandmother. The noble chapel adjoining the preacher's house was built during my grandfather's residence. When he died, twenty-two years later, after leaving the Circuit, he was buried in the Longholme graveyard, and his tombstone stands close under the wall of the preacher's house. During my own residence a servant gave notice to leave because she had been told my grandfather's spirit haunted the premises. I was able to allay her fears by the assurance that if the report were happily well-founded the house was under the very best protection.

This appointment to the Bacup Circuit was a surprise. My grandfather was expecting to go to York, and the change was not at first a welcome one. His remarks on the subject, in a letter to his son, offer a fine example for preachers suffering from similar disappointment.



LONGHOLME PARSONAGE, RAWTENSTALL.



LONGHOLME WESLEYAN CHAPEL, RAWTENSTALL.



August 11th, 1841.

My Dear John,—

I have this morning received the Stations, and find that I am down for the Bacup Circuit, seventeen miles from Manchester. How far human prejudices and passions, on account of my freedom of speech and action in the cause of Total Abstinence have been permitted to sway the Conference in giving me this appointment, it is not worth your while or mine to consider or enquire, since the providence of God is what we chiefly regard ; so that looking beyond mere party purposes I receive my appointment as immediately from Christ, by whose grace I have been made a Minister of His holy gospel. I shall not go to my Circuit with a sour or discontented mind ; but, the Lord being my helper, I shall enter on my work with renewed vigour, and demeaning myself as becomes a Christian towards all men, I will labour to promote holiness and salvation among the people. But as to my being moved from my attachment to Teetotalism and the advocacy of its excellent and beneficial principles, on all proper occasions, that is quite out of the question. Herein I call no man master on earth. Blessed be God, I feel in my soul a perfect calm. So as I may but serve the Lord Christ, what does it matter as to place ?

Writing a few weeks later on same matter he says :—

I cannot but admire the providential goodness of God in choosing for me one of the most quiet,



rural, and pleasant spots in England. I am more than ever convinced of the blessedness of leaving all my concerns to the fatherly goodness of God ; no matter how second causes work, we shall then be certainly guided right. Only let us be patient and wait to see the end of a matter ; for if we judge of Providence hastily we shall commonly be mistaken, especially in adversity.

My grandfather's patient submission was richly rewarded. At Rawtenstall he passed three of the happiest years of his ministry ; at Rawtenstall my father spent two years on the threshold of manhood, drawing inspiration from his father's life and words ; at Rawtenstall, nearly half a century later, my own two years in intimate association with my father as his colleague in the ministry were a joy and privilege to thank God for through eternity. And never had Methodist preacher kinder and more generous friends than grandfather, father, and son found in that valley of Rossendale.

For two years the young tutor, boy tutor no longer, held his little school opposite the gates of the Longholme Chapel, then he removed with his father to Yarmouth, and entered the Grammar School there. He felt keenly his own need of further education. A thirst for knowledge oppressed him. The boy tutor was lost in the earnest student.



## CHAPTER IV.

### CALLED TO PREACH.

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HIS first sermon left the preacher dismayed, distressed, and utterly dejected. Indeed, it was not a whole sermon. The half of it was never told. The chapel was a barn, the congregation a small gathering of villagers, the pulpit an extemporized reading-stand. There could be no doubt about the preacher's earnestness. Very young he was, but full of zeal. His tall figure, and fair hair, and blue eyes, and mellow tones, and intense seriousness rivetted the attention of his hearers. For awhile all went well. Then came confusion of thought, a desperate attempt to preserve the sequence of ideas, a few more stammered sentences, dead silence. The congregation looked up expectant, the preacher looked down bewildered. Then he turned away hurriedly, and fled from the building. The service broke up abruptly, and kind friends sought the preacher with words of comfort and encouragement. But where had young Mr. Shrewsbury put himself? In his mortification he had taken refuge behind a haystack, and there, shrinking in shame from the hearers of his broken discourse, he resolved that never again would he occupy such a position. It seemed clear to him that whatever else the Lord might have intended him for He had never meant him to become a

preacher. How truly is Divine strength perfected in human weakness ! In after years the discomfited young preacher became one of his Church's most persuasive and soul-winning preachers.

I have only the memory of my father's description to fall back upon for this incident. The exact place and date are uncertain. It seems to have happened in the Isle of Man. In 1845 the family moved from Yarmouth to Retford. The removal, so easy to effect to-day, was at that period a tedious and complicated affair. It is minutely described in a letter received by John Shrewsbury on his nineteenth birthday. "We left Yarmouth according to arrangement at three o'clock on Tuesday, and arrived at Hull at ten the next morning. Without going on shore we removed with our luggage to the Gainsborough packet, which sailed about twelve, and brought us to Gainsborough about four ; and a conveyance being ready we set off without delay the ten miles by land to Retford, where we arrived about six in the evening."

John was at this time studying at University College in London. The liberality of Dr. King, his mother's brother in Barbados, opened out this opportunity for him. He applied himself to study with intense ardour. He lodged meantime, to help the family, with his stepmother's brother. His rooms were four miles from the college. The fatigue arising from those long daily walks (there was no underground railway), and his intensity of application, resulted after a few months in a complete breakdown, and weeks of prostration. From

that period, probably, dated a weakness of heart which became a "thorn in the flesh" to the end of his life:

The question of his life's work had yet to be settled. In his 16th year, whilst still the boy-tutor, John Shrewsbury felt within himself a strong desire to become a minister, but it lay dormant awhile. Now it revived again. Little wonder that he felt the spell of gracious influences. He inherited the prayers of three generations. The very letter just quoted conveyed not only loving greetings, but wise counsels also, and the stimulus of tender encouragement. "You are now fast approaching to man's estate, and we shall anxiously watch your future goings, as, if you are permitted to live, so very much will depend on the next four or five years. Your character will then take its mature and ripe form, and I pray God it may answer to that most exalted character which in a former age was given of one by Him who knoweth what is in man: 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.' Nothing short of perfection must satisfy you. . . . To God's care and blessing we have just now unitedly commended you. It was your mother's turn to pray, and her prayer for you was beautiful and full of simple piety. A mother praising God in Heaven, and one who prays often for you on earth, with other kindred, surely blessings will descend abundantly and rest upon you. Nor should I forget to mention your grandmother's eminently devotional spirit last evening in family worship. The Psalm in course

of reading was the 42nd, and that clause of it, 'And my prayer unto the God of my life,' so deeply affected her, that for some moments we all sat in silence till she was able to proceed. In prayer a holy unction rested upon her, and you had your full share of her pious benedictions."

This is but a sample of scores of letters written in the same strain of faithful and loving admonition, relieved at times by touches of dry humour and caustic criticism. Alas, not a single reply exists. My father's home letters came into his hands again at his father's death, and whilst with a filial reverence, that grew ever deeper with his own advancing years, he preserved carefully all he received in this correspondence, he has destroyed with a ruthless modesty all that he wrote in answer. When he begged his father, as age crept on, to draw up an autobiography, or at least to put him in possession of material to write his life, the veteran missionary steadily refused. "Let me alone," he said, "I have made noise enough in my time." In the same spirit my father has done his utmost by the destruction of his own letters, and diaries, and memoranda to make impossible the loving labour of setting down his life's record. It seems clear, however, that all thoughts of the ministry passed from him for awhile. His uncle would have liked him go through a medical training, with a view to joining him ultimately in Barbados. A little later his own mind was set on law. Then his first desire to preach sprang up again. He was put upon the Lambeth Circuit plan by the Rev.

Jonathan Crowther, and entered into the work with ardour, preaching not only on Sundays but on week nights also. But clouds arose. Had he received a genuine call to preach? The doubt caused much distress of mind. His uncle, too, sent from the West Indies a vigorous protest. He was providing him with funds for a collegiate course, and that he should neglect that primary object for preaching "could not be pleasing either to Providence or his uncle." Then, too, the question arose, if he were indeed called to preach, to what ministry should he join himself? His thoughts turned strongly at that time to the Established Church. He had seen a Methodist preacher's life from the inside, and seen so, much stage effect is lost.

The triennial removals, the exacting discipline, the poverty, above all, the terrible grip upon a preacher's destiny possessed often by men of low spirituality and advanced ignorance, these were matters to be carefully weighed. It was rankling in John Shrewsbury's mind at this period that his father had been driven away from Yarmouth because the fidelity of his sermons and his strictness of principle had given offence. With the severe plainness of Methodist ritual and architecture the young man had little sympathy. His father's stern Puritanism was not in him. To the end of his days the glamour of age and art clinging about the Established Church fascinated him. Of set purpose, he chose eventually the new wine of Methodism for its expansive energy, but he loved the mellow flavour of the old. And when for a while it seemed to him that the Established

Church appealed not only to the æsthetic side of his character, but offered also greater breadth and scope, and freedom from certain forms of petty tyranny, he felt strongly attracted to it. He wrote to his father on the subject.

The reply abounded in sage counsel. Methodism was not a perfect Church, but—well, in effect, he was contrasting his intimate knowledge of the weakness of Methodism with the outward charms of the Established Church superficially viewed. Had he recognized that that great ecclesiastical organization might have even graver defects? The letter is worth quoting from.

As to the Establishment, I reverence it as “the mother of us all,” and especially on account of the connection with it of Wesley, Coke, Fletcher, and others. • But I could not be a minister of the Church of England as it is now constituted. There is not catholicity enough in the Church of England for my heart. I never look on the Establishment without thinking of the rough and blunt expression of good old Bishop Latimer—“mingle mangle.” Certainly the ministers are a heterogeneous mass—good, bad, and indifferent. The predominant spirit of the clergy (though there are a few exceptions) is pride, and the most abominable haughtiness towards all ministers but themselves. No son should willingly become one of an order, who, *as an order*, despise and condemn his father, and the people also to whom himself and that father owe the blessing of the knowledge of salvation.

After commenting upon certain defects in the discipline of the Church of England, the letter proceeds, "Methodism remains, not a *perfect* system, for there is no perfect system, nor will there ever be, so to look for one is folly. As a whole, it is the best with which I am acquainted, and would approach as near perfection as any mere system can, if it were always worked according to its own pure and simple economy. A Methodist preacher doubtless will have much to bear with, both from the Methodists and from his own brethren occasionally in the ministry, but if he gives himself heartily to his work, and follows uprightness, he cannot fail to be a blessing, and to exert a counter-acting influence upon the evils he may see and deplore. So that on the whole I still say Methodism for me, and I trust that I shall not in vain endeavour to guide your mind to the same decision." A further paragraph sets forth the indebtedness of the whole family to Methodism, and concludes, "Wherefore what might be more pleasing to flesh and blood must be lighter in your estimation than the small dust of the balance."

It was probably due to this letter that the young student gave up all thoughts of turning his back upon the Church to which, as his father pointed out, he owed everything. But the difficulties which beset him as a preacher were not removed. He felt the force of his uncle's protest. Above all, he was weighed down with a sense of his own unfitness. He returned his Plan to the Superintendent. A little later, his college course completed, he obtained



a place as master at the Retford Grammar School, and lived again under his father's roof. The call to preach now became imperious. He fought against it. "If I had my choice," he said, "I would rather follow the plough." The words made a deep impression upon a young girl who heard them. They tarry in her memory to-day, though half a century has rolled by. "I could not understand," she writes, "how such a good young man could feel so. I had not then learned that they who most clearly see God most deeply abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes." The struggle was prolonged, but an intensity of inward conviction triumphed. The Grammar School master began to preach again, and became, in the course of a few months, at once an accredited Local Preacher and a Candidate for the Wesleyan Ministry.

About the same time his brother Joseph, after similar hesitation, was received upon the Plan of the Bradford Eastbrook Circuit. The two brothers were frequently together, and the influence of the younger told powerfully upon the elder. In temperament the brothers differed widely. John possessed a strong vein of humour. He loved a joke. To Joseph every jest seemed ill-timed. He was even then suffering from that affection of the heart which within a year proved fatal. A premonition of early death had already seized him. His short life must be intense. In June, 1848, the brothers attended several meetings together in the Retford Circuit. At one John, light hearted and buoyant, was meditating a humorous speech. But

Joseph addressed the meeting first. His impassioned earnestness thrilled the company. "My light ideas," wrote his brother in his account of the meeting, "vanished, and I dare not speak of any other subject than that of the necessity of working while it is called to-day. Eternity alone will reveal what I owe to Joseph's prayers, and most kind and faithful counsels." Happily, a sense of the humorous never deserted my father. But for his quickness to perceive the laughable side of disagreeable experiences, such as every Methodist preacher must face from time to time, his sensitive nature would often have been deeply hurt. But the intensity of Joseph's life left a permanent mark upon his brother's character in a deep and sweet seriousness that never left him. It was John who in these days sent to his grandfather a copy of *Punch*, and was rebuked for it. It was the same John who at seventy relished keenly the light drollery of true wit. But never would he suffer a jest on sacred subjects, or allow humour, the sauce of literature, to take the place of a staple food.

In the Sheffield District Meeting, held at Retford in May, 1848, Mr. John Shrewsbury was unanimously recommended as a candidate for the ministry. In July he went up to London to be examined by the Committee appointed by the Conference to test further and report upon all candidates approved by the District Meetings. In the same railway carriage three old Woodhouse Grove boys travelled, Thomas Wilde, Thomas S. Raby, and George E. Allen. All four had met in the same Society Class at school ;

all four were candidates for the ministry ; all four were examined together, and recommended to the Conference. The Conference met that year (1848) at Hull. Dr. Newton was President ; John V. B. Shrewsbury was accepted, and designated for home work. He was not sent to one of the theological training colleges, for the alleged reason that his education was already completed. He was placed, therefore, upon the President's list of reserve, amongst a band of young men liable to be called out at a day's notice to go anywhere by the President's instruction where death, sickness, or other causes made a supply necessary in the place of an appointed minister. Referring a few months later to this Conference his father says, "Mr. Mallinson told me yesterday that the President was much pleased with your spirit and manner on the day he had an interview with you. So live, my son, that *Christ* may be pleased with you in all things."

The next few months were perplexing to the young preacher. He could not take up again his duties at the Retford Grammar School, for he might be sent to a Circuit at any moment. His father's straitened circumstances made it difficult to keep him at home unemployed, and the son's independent spirit refused to tolerate it. He began therefore a small private school at Dewsbury, to which Circuit his father had removed. In April, 1849, the President directed him to proceed to the Woodhouse Grove Circuit, to fill a vacancy made by the sudden death of one of the ministers. His lodgings were at Idle, near Bradford. He spoke of himself some-

times as the idle preacher. It was a jest without suggestion. He threw himself into his work with such intense ardour that his brother Joseph, whose standard of a minister's fidelity was very high, wrote to warn him against committing sanctified suicide. There was some hope that at Conference he might be appointed to the Circuit as one of its ministers. But he was disappointed, and the disappointment was greater when, at the close of the Conference, he was still left upon the President's List of Reserve. But a few week's later he was sent to Leeds, St. Peter's, to supply for the Rev. T. O. Keysell, smitten down with cholera. The pestilence was then raging in Leeds. The young preacher moved fearlessly amongst the dead and dying. Surely it was a time to arouse sinners with the Gospel's trumpet note. The "supply" did not spare words. He was a very Boanerges. One sermon in particular called forth an angry anonymous letter. It was laid before the sick minister. "The devil is offended, Brother Shrewsbury," he said, "*go and preach it again.*" God made the wrath of the anonymous letter writer praise Him. The sermon was preached again. Twenty-seven souls were saved under that unasked for *encore*, and the preacher received a leg of mutton from a grateful convert. It was a lesson for life. Conscience-stirring sermons might bring upon him bitter reproaches to begin with. It needed but faith and courage to repeat them, and legs of mutton would close the account.

Memories of those few months of "supply" survive even to-day. The young preacher's commission

was sealed with souls. Joseph writes home on August 31st of that year (1849): "John is twenty-three years old to-day. Last Sunday morning he preached to a crowded congregation at St. Peter's. In the evening he took his stand at five o'clock near the house of a person who had died of cholera, and gave the people a short address from "Be ye therefore ready." He then proceeded to Richmond Hill Chapel, which was well filled, and the Lord gave him fifteen souls."

But dark shadows soon fell. In September the fearless young revivalist was himself smitten with the pestilence. Scarcely had he recovered when a more terrible blow came. On November 26th, his brother Joseph, the young doctor, died as he sat at the bedside of a patient, with the words on his lips, "The soul first and then the body." The bonds that knit the brothers together were very close, and the last year had drawn them still closer. John was a minister, Joseph a local preacher, already looking forward to becoming a medical missionary if spared. One of the most familiar objects of my own childhood was the old-fashioned ivy-green wooden arm-chair in my father's study. Joseph died in it. My grandfather bought it from the family as a priceless relic. My father inherited it. It was worth more than its weight in gold to him. It was Joseph's throne of triumph, and became his own chair of revelations. Where the one brother received his sudden vision of death, the other brother received through long subsequent years divine messages for the living.





THE COLLIER'S RETURN.

But the terrible experiences of this year did not impair the preacher's energy. He saw in them only a summons to more ardent activity. The Watch-night service of that year was a memorable occasion. My father conducted it at Garforth. The congregation was deeply stirred, and a revival broke out. The preacher spent New Year's Day in visiting the colliers' cottages. In one he found a woman in deep distress of soul. A few neighbours came in, and a prayer meeting was held. The groans of penitents soon turned to the praises of the saved. But the woman's husband was in the pit, "And ah, sir," she said, "he is not converted."

"Let us pray for him," replied the preacher, and they knelt down again. Whilst they were on their knees the man himself opened the door and came in black with coal dust. He had felt miserable in the pit, and an impulse he could not resist had brought him home. He knelt and bowed his grimy face in his hands, and in a little while husband and wife were rejoicing together in the love of God.

All doubt and fear had now passed, all mistrust as to the pathway marked out, all oppressive sense of unfitness for the work of the ministry. The young minister humbled himself yet more before God, but never again could he disbelieve that he had received a call to preach.





## CHAPTER V.

### THE YOUNG MINISTER'S TRIUMPH.

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IT was a dreary service. The pulpit was draped in black. A prominent member had just died, and the Church itself seemed to be expiring. The eye ranged over a wilderness of pews. In the great Walcot Chapel, Bath, with accommodation for fifteen hundred hearers, about fifty people were scattered here and there. Mr. John Shrewsbury was the preacher. He had left the warmth and earnestness of Leeds Methodism in February, 1850, to take the place of a suspended preacher at Bath, and this was his first service in the Walcot chapel. The suspended preacher had been greatly beloved. He was a man of kindly nature and strong convictions. He saw in the Reform agitation of 1849 a popular clamour for the redress of certain grievances, a clamour little likely to be stilled by coercion. He felt some sympathy with the opposition party. He not only felt it, he expressed it. To think such things was dangerous, to utter them penal. The outspoken preacher was arraigned and suspended till Conference, when his perverted sympathies terminated in expulsion. Meanwhile he still occupied the house by the chapel gates, and the young minister sent in his place had continually to pass and repass his windows.

It was no easy position to hold. Party feeling ran very high. The great majority of the congregation left with their minister. The loyal minority resented bitterly the terrible schism. It seemed as if that congregation were doomed to extinction, and certainly this young preacher, who looked down over the black pulpit-cushion upon a handful of curious hearers, seemed the last man to revive a forlorn hope. He was a sorrowful young man. And well he might be. He came from a glowing Circuit to this rent Church. And the second great trouble of his life lay heavy upon him. "Joseph was not." The brother whose loving counsel and sympathy had been an inspiration lay yonder in the graveyard of the Bradford Eastbrook Chapel. Himself in mourning, the pulpit in mourning, the congregation in mourning, little wonder that the preacher was described as "a sad-faced young man." He struggled through a sermon from the text, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." It was not a rousing discourse at Bath. In Leeds it had been quite another thing. But here all the circumstances were dispiriting. A supernumerary minister was in the congregation. "Well," said his daughter after the service, "what did you think of the preacher?" The answer was brief and dry. "He won't set the Thames on fire."

Yet that sermon, flat as it fell, struck the keynote of my father's work in Bath. With conspicuous discretion and tact he moved amongst men of all parties, in an atmosphere superheated

with jealousy, and anger, and bitterness of spirit, and he escaped the perils besetting him by holding resolutely to his one theme, "Behold the Lamb of God." To the end of his days he believed that the strife of that terrible period might have been greatly mitigated if the milder measures and greater elasticity of later Methodism had prevailed. And he felt a deep sympathy for the suspended minister whose place he filled. But the only sympathy he expressed was a sympathy for perishing souls. Men might be of the "Old Body" or "Reformers;"—the same message was good for both,—“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

As he travelled to Bath, anxious and perplexed about the work awaiting him there, two texts occurred to the young preacher, and great comfort and guidance sprang out of them. The words suddenly flashed upon his mind, "I have much people in this city." Yes, in *this* city. Was the spirit of God limited to cholera stricken and repentant Leeds? Would not prayer and faith work the same miracles in fashionable Bath? And then came the words, "Discretion shall preserve thee." He was about to enter a field of mixed growths. The eager hands that rooted out the tares might easily pluck up much wheat. "Discretion shall preserve thee." He would need the cunning of the serpent and the harmlessness of a dove. Under the spell of these passages the preacher entered the city; under the same spell he chose his first text. And soon it came to be recognised

that he was neither law-giver nor Connexional detective, but simply an earnest and untiring evangelist. The most censorious and discontented could find no fault with the faithful and gracious Gospel messages to which he strictly confined himself, or with the unremitting pastoral attention shared out impartially to the "Old Body" and Reformers alike. At this time also his father's counsels proved very valuable. The son was anxious, depressed, weighed down with the difficulties and responsibilities of his position, disturbed still more by a distressing sense of his spiritual poverty. The father saw in this distress a bright omen. "The Holy Spirit may lead you sometimes to godly mourning without condemnation, but when He thus leads you it will be generally found that it is preparatory to exaltation in Christ's righteousness, and further usefulness in Christ's holy service. I take it, therefore, as a token for good that the Lord hath thus dealt with you in the commencement of your ministry at Bath." And then referring to the extreme difficulty of his son's appointment, and the fact that it was an appointment unsought, he continues:—"It is this consideration that makes me entirely satisfied with your present position, painful and difficult as it is, for as it has not been chosen *by* you, but chosen *for* you, we are fully assured it is just the station you ought to occupy."

To these fatherly counsels and consolations were added his father's prayers. "I thought much about you, once in particular last Sunday, and was led to ask that you might become a mighty harvest

man.” And a harvester he did become. Within a short time he was able to report that the Gospel he preached was as powerful at Bath as in Leeds. The immediate reply was, “On your behalf I greatly praise the Lord. On Sunday morning I asked for you, that for scores you might have hundreds, and for hundreds thousands of souls. Is that too much to expect from God?”

I quote from yet another letter in the series, for who can gauge the influence of this correspondence as a determining factor in the young minister's triumph? It is the birthday letter of the year. “My dear John, son of my Hillaria, whose mortal remains are probably by this time dust, whose spirit dwells with God; brother of our Joseph, whose mortal remains are corrupt, while his spirit is a flame of fire before the throne; servant of my Saviour, who has had wonderful patience with me in my poor, imperfect ministry for thirty-five years, I beseech you ‘be a man of God.’ Entering on another Methodistic year, just at the time you enter on another natural year of life, so that one might almost say *you were born a Conference man*, I hope you will have a judicious and carefully prepared plan of study and living. A man who ceases to be *studious* will become a dull, heavy, unprofitable preacher. The fire of youth soon spends itself, and none but the prayerful and diligent wear well to the last.”

When the first days of depression, almost of despair, had passed, my father set himself resolutely to face his difficulties. He refused absolutely

to enter in controversy. He refused equally to hear evil spoken of anyone. Who were right and who wrong in matters of ecclesiastical strife was a question outside the sphere of his work. All were sinners before God. He held without swerving to his message. "Behold the Lamb of God." Within a month the young preacher's work was telling so distinctly that the following note was entered in the diary of one of the most earnest members of the Society :—

"March 17th, 1850. Much blessing has attended the ministry of Mr. Shrewsbury, a devoted young minister, who has lately come amongst us." By Conference the whole Circuit felt his influence, and a special request was sent from the Quarterly Meeting that the "supply" might be appointed for the ensuing year as an additional minister, the entire expense being guaranteed by the Circuit without drawing upon the Connexional Funds. The request was granted, and in the Minutes of Conference for 1851 the ministers stationed at Bath were Peter Duncan, William Willan, John V. B. Shrewsbury.

The winter of that year was a memorable season. Conversions were continually occurring, not only during Sabbath worship, but at the Friday night prayer-meetings and the early morning services. Twice a week my father held a meeting from six to seven o'clock in the morning in the Walcot Schoolroom. On Tuesdays the gathering was for prayer and praise, with a brief address, on Thursdays he preached. The memory of those early hours

is still sweet to the surviving few who took part in them.

The chapel began to fill again. Deserters returned in numbers ; fresh members were added week by week. At the following Conference the Circuit repeated its request for the re-appointment of its third minister on the same conditions, and it was granted again.

These successes were won by zeal, patience, tact, and unceasing prayer. On the second Sunday after he came to Bath, the "supply" went to preach at Twerton, a village two miles from the city. He was to meet all the classes before the service. Only a small gathering was expected, for the reform agitation had swept the Society. The large room, however, was packed with angry members, eager to vent their wrath on the young preacher, who appeared to them in the light of an ecclesiastical blackleg. One after another rose and railed against the Conference. The women spoke in tearful tones of their beloved pastor torn from them. Intense excitement prevailed. What could a young preacher of twenty-four do to stem such a torrent of angry passions? He suggested meekly that as they could not alter the state of things in that meeting they should give themselves to spiritual edification. "Go on, brother," an excited member shouted, "speak out your mind, don't 'e be stopped. The sooner these yere laws of Conference be torn to pieces and trampled under foot the better ;" and to point the words, he brought his foot down with an

emphatic bang. Pastoral advice and exhortation, as usually given at such meetings, became impossible. The preacher shot out brief and vague replies, such as "Remember Matthew vi. 6, and all will be well." "Cultivate the beatitudes, my brother."

The meeting over, the majority of the members streamed away to the recently opened rival place of worship. But a leading spirit amongst the agitators remained, and seating himself in the gallery opposite the preacher, note-book in hand, made ready to jot down any unwise utterances the sermon might contain. An inflammatory journal would have given willing publicity to them. But the preacher was wary. His words dealt out only unadulterated gospel. The sermon was the previous Sunday's discourse from the text, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." If it failed to rouse the enthusiasm of the congregation in Walcot Chapel, it served admirably to damp the ardour of these village agitators. The hungry note-book returned empty to the critic's pocket. Preacher and critic met after the service in the vestry. The critic was in a surly mood. The preacher said, "I want to visit a few of the people next Tuesday." The critic growled, "It's time they were, they never are." Then with the gracious and dignified air characteristic of him, the preacher asserted his intention of calling upon his surly brother, and begged that he would accompany him upon a round of pastoral visitation. His heart softened. He was transformed from a foe into a



friend, and did all he could to make the preacher's path smooth for him. The class-meeting and the subsequent visitation, and the influence of the surly brother—surly no more—resulted in bringing back several leading families who had been carried away by the agitation.

Upon personal influence individually exerted my father largely relied. He had a word in season for everybody, and he was ready to do anything, travelling far outside the routine of merely ministerial duties, that he might be a true servant of Christ. A communication lies before me from a gentleman who retains a vivid impression of those days.

“ My relation to him was merely that of a youth seeking for religious counsel and spiritual help. This I did not fail to receive from him, and he was the means of leading me to a stronger confidence ; and, to use his own words to me at the time, ‘ a more affectionate faith.’ But what left an indelible impression upon me was a little incident that occurred during our occasional intercourse. I believe that it was at his own desire that I accompanied him one summer evening to a cottage service held in Combe Down. Those who know the locality will remember the steepness of the ‘ Carriage Road,’ the most direct approach to the Down. When somewhat more than half way up we overtook an elderly woman of the poorer sort, toiling under the burden of a heavy basket. With Christian politeness Mr. Shrewsbury took this burden upon himself, to her great relief. On reaching the

top of the hill, and handing back to her the basket, he said, 'Carry all your other burdens to Christ.' Those who knew him best will perhaps recognise this as characteristic."

In the course of his pastoral work during this period, my father visited a man horribly afflicted with scrofula. His wife was worn out with the strain of long nursing. To relieve the weary wife, and find for himself a golden opportunity of ministering to the sick man, body and soul, the young minister sat up with him throughout one of the nights immediately preceding the patient's death. It was a service of true devotion, for throughout his life he was particularly fastidious in his abhorrence of evil sights and smells.

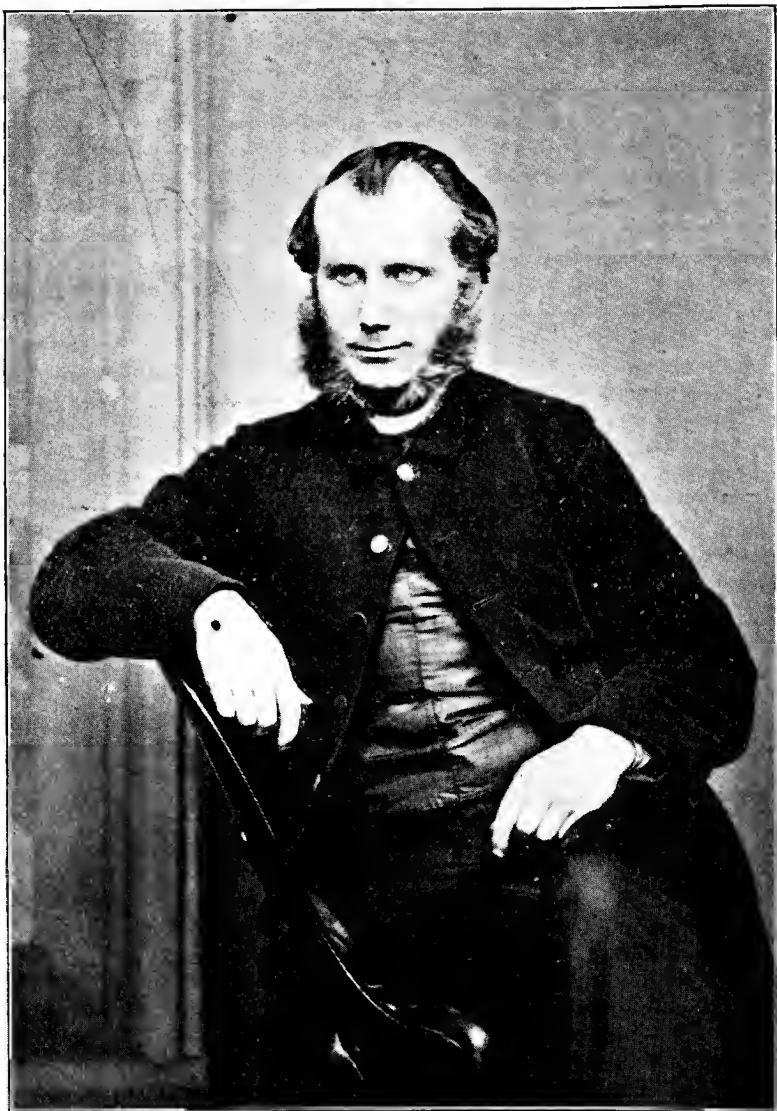
On another occasion he found the Walcot chapel-keeper's family in distress, the father overwhelmed with work, the mother prostrate with sickness and worry, a child ill, and in need of attention the mother could not give. It was not exactly in his line, but the young preacher, ready to help in any way, gave the child a bath, and put it comfortably to bed.

When the schoolmaster was ill he supplied his place for three days as teacher, to give him needed rest. He was willing and eager to set his hands to any work of ministering. He had his reward, and a rich one, the minister's greatest joy. Conversions were continuous. He entered the city downcast, and overwhelmed by the thought of the difficulties he had to face. In fear and trembling, a sad-faced young preacher, he delivered his first

message, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." With growing boldness he reiterated it, and the Lord honoured it. He had the joy of recording between February, 1850, and September, 1852, the names of between three and four hundred seekers for salvation. In August he preached his farewell sermon in Walcot Chapel from the text, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." He was no longer a sad preacher. It was no mere handful of hearers he addressed. A large congregation filled the chapel, and very many were present to whom the preacher had been God's herald of mercy. They could never forget his words and influence. His glance wandered over the pews, and on every side he recognised with intense joy that God had given him "souls for his hire, and seals to his ministry." The rent Society was healed. The all but extinct congregation had grown to its former proportions. A harvest of souls had been gathered in. The young minister's triumph was complete.







REV. J. V. B. SHREWSBURY,  
AS A YOUNG MINISTER.

## CHAPTER VI.

### “ THIS CHANCE OF NOBLE DEEDS.”

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I N Tennyson's “ Holy Grail,” King Arthur bemoans his Knights' vow to ride in quest of of the wondrous vision ;—

“ Go, since your vows are sacred, being made :  
Yet—for ye know the cries of all my realm—  
Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my Knights,  
Your places being vacant at my side,  
This chance of noble deeds will come and go  
Unchallenged, whilst ye follow wandering fires,  
Lost in the quagmire.”

My father put before everything else in his ministry “ this chance of noble deeds.” Others, if they would, might pursue the pathway of ambition, or turn aside from the multitude to indulge in mystic dreams, for him there was only one course. He must be at his Lord's side, where the cries of all the realm entered, ready at a word to receive his commission to right any wrong, to heal any wounds, to succour any distressed soul. In all Scripture there were no words which lay more heavily upon his conscience than these: “ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to proclaim the

acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God ; to comfort all that mourn ; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

From the beginning of his ministry as a "supply," to the day, forty-six years later, when he retired from active service, that commission was held sacred, above and beyond everything else. Reckoning off the months spent in "supply" work at Bradford and Leeds, my father fulfilled the maximum three years appointment in each of the following fifteen circuits:—Bath, Shrewsbury, Sheffield, Leeds (Oxford Place), Manchester (Oldham Street), Manchester (Grosvenor Street), Altrincham, Hackney, Croydon, Glasgow (Claremont Street), Birmingham (Islington), Hull (Waltham Street), Filey, Rawtenstall, Nottingham (Halifax Place). The last eight appointments, from Hackney onwards, carried the peculiar cares and responsibilities attaching to the term "Superintendent Minister." The work involved by appointments to these influential centres of Methodist life was necessarily heavy, and the strain often great. During the second half of the period many financial difficulties had to be faced, and intricate Circuit problems grappled with. But throughout the "preacher" survived. Neither schedules nor trust deeds, nor Circuit debts, nor chapel-building schemes, nor the dividing of Circuits, nor any of those other business details, which more and more, as Methodist organization swells and grows, threaten to transform preachers

into clerks and notaries, were permitted to eclipse the great commission. "This chance of noble deeds" was ever the uppermost thought. And many were the opportunities that came, and nobly were they responded to. Yet these deeds were, for the most part, done in secret, known only to those immediately concerned, and difficult even to outline in these pages, lest the feelings of the benefited should be hurt, and the honour of the benefactor tarnished by the very recital. I am not speaking of those ordinary acts of kindness and charity in which every Methodist preacher delights. There was in my father's character a certain quixotic strain. He felt impelled to try the effect of his commission in cases where men not less earnest, but less dominated by Isaiah lxi. 1-3, would have felt a policy of silent sympathy and private prayer the only policy available. He went further. With an unwavering faith in the possibilities of the Gospel, he interested himself actively in attempting apparently hopeless rescues. The "horrible pit" was never so deep, the "miry clay" never so adhesive, but he believed in the power of divine grace to draw a victim out, and in his own call to let down a rope. I can only sketch in faint outlines a few instances. They are but samples of work in which he was continuously engaged throughout the whole of his ministerial life.

In the first place, the seed basket was always at hand. There is a subtle temptation to ministers, after a period of spiritual activity, when they have sown the seed broadcast over the congregation, to



stay the hand. It is a paradox of human nature, that a maximum of ardent preaching may correspond to a minimum of individual effort. There is a not less subtle temptation arising from the fear of appearing merely professional. These temptations my father escaped. He carried his seed basket everywhere. He never left it behind him in the pulpit. Again and again, moving up and down the country I have met with the happy results of those sowings by the way-side.

"I shall never forget your father," said the Superintendent of a large Sunday School. "When I was a young man I heard him say in an address that no unconverted teacher was fit for his position. I was a Sunday School teacher then, and unconverted, and I felt so much hurt that I decided to resign. Just then my father was ill, and your father came to see him. I recognized his voice in the passage and tried to escape him, but he ran up against me on the stairs. 'Well,' he said, 'how is your class getting on?' I told him I was going to give it up, and why. He put his hand kindly on my shoulder and said earnestly, 'There is no need to do that. There is a better way. Give your heart to God, and you will enjoy teaching as you have never done before.' There was something in your father's words and manner that quite overcame me. I took his advice. I gave myself to God that very day, and have been a Sunday School worker ever since." The incident is characteristic. Many such might be given. Only the great day can reveal what joy will fall to the sower, what record of noble deeds

will be his, who has had the courage to carry his seed basket everywhere.

In boyhood my father was a thorough-going “teetotaller,” or rather, for he abhorred that word, a staunch abstainer. He inherited all his father’s intense hatred of the drink traffic, and all his resolute opposition to it. But his opposition, though equally uncompromising, was more discriminating. The father’s condemnation of drink included equally those who offered it. The son recognized the kind motive that often prompted the insidious offer. He realized, moreover, that many of the noblest and most generous natures become the victims of alcohol, and his warm sympathy and unflagging patience gave him a marked influence in dealing with such cases. Unflagging, indeed, his patience required to be. The pledge signed, a brief period of abstinence, the pledge broken, drunkenness, *delirium tremens*, the pledge signed again, and so on through recurring cycles, such was the history of many of the cases he undertook. Often it seemed as if months of unremitting prayer had been thrown away. Yet he never complained, and never allowed discouragement to paralyze either his sympathies or his efforts. And in some cases the successes won more than compensated for all disheartening failures. In the Conference of 1872 a minister was arraigned for intemperance. The charges were conclusively established. There seemed to be only one course open to the Conference. My father had followed the case with intense interest. He knew the minister. He believed in him. He foresaw possibilities of

restoration, and of future triumph. As yet he had never addressed the Conference. Now he rose in his place, and with passionate earnestness pleaded for the brother whose fault, grievous as it was, he represented as neither past pardon nor past recovery. And then, whilst the Conference listened with bated breath, he pledged himself in the brother's behalf. If the Conference, instead of cutting off the offender, would grant him a year's grace by making him a supernumerary for that period, he would make himself his guardian; he would see him every day, he would help him to fight his battle; and he believed that, by God's blessing, before the ensuing Conference the brother, already all but broken-hearted in his penitence, would have entirely recovered himself. It was an appeal such as the Conference had perhaps never heard before. It moved every heart. The request was granted. My father immediately took a house within a few yards of his own, and the minister in question and his family moved into it. Day by day the two ministers were in close association. The struggle was fierce at first, but the guardian was always at hand with words of sympathy and good cheer. He had the joy of seeing his brother minister daily gaining ground. By the following Conference he was able to report that not once during the year had the pledge been broken. The recovery was complete. Conference received again with deep joy the brother restored, and appointed him to a Circuit. His ministry during a period of twelve months brought a blessing

upon the Circuit, then a fatal illness seized him, and he died, loved and respected by all. Referring to this case, Dr. Punshon wrote from Toronto in September, 1872 : "I rejoice to find that you have found your voice in Conference. I cannot refrain from telling you how highly I esteem—not your education speech, though you need not be ashamed of that,—but that other Christ-like thing, which brought tears to my eyes and a doxology to my lips when I read of it (in a private letter). I mean the promise to watch over—and help him in the great life-battle with his morbid appetite. May God bless you for this."

In two other instances my father undertook similar responsibilities. One case was an exact parallel. A house was taken, as before, but the sudden death of the minister occurred before it could be occupied. In the third case a strong plea was urged on behalf of a brother whose eccentricities furnished the Stationing Committee with an insoluble problem. For two years my father had him under his constant supervision. With boundless charity he refused to see in his brother's behaviour anything more than freaks of wayward genius. He confessed himself hopelessly beaten when, after indefatigable efforts to control the same freaks, his eccentric charge gave it out that Mr. Shrewsbury would never have been able to manage the Circuit if he had not been at the back of him !

As an illustration of the way in which my father not only seized clear opportunities of rescue work, but even sought to create such chances, the following

may be given;” Returning home from a service in a Scotch city, he saw a well-dressed young man, already drunk, stagger into a dram-shop, and followed him in. He ordered a glass of whiskey, and was about to take it, when my father said to the barman, “It is at your peril you serve him ; you see the state he is in.” The glass was immediately withdrawn.

“Who are you?” cried the young man angrily.

“I am your friend,” was the reply.

“Will you have a glass of lemonade then?”

“No thank you, sir, I’ll have nothing here. Come out and I’ll talk with you.”

They passed out together. The young man proved to be the son of an Elder of the Established Church. He was thoroughly miserable. He felt that he had disgraced himself and his family. He added, fiercely, “I’ll drink myself to the devil, if there be a devil.” The kind response of his friend, who already saw in prospect reconciliation and restoration, was cut short. A passing street girl carried the young man off, and his life’s chance, had he known it, escaped him.

As a peace-maker my father was conspicuously successful in several cases. He abhorred feuds, whether family quarrels or Church contentions. In the case of a brother and sister-in-law a feud of long standing had become so bitter that they refused even to speak when they met at the chapel doors. He entered into correspondence with each ; and in due time effected a complete reconciliation. A little later the sister ministered to her brother in his

last sickness. His wife was ill at the time, and hardly expected to recover. The sister's unfailing kindness was an unspeakable comfort, and all three cherished the deepest gratitude for the friend whose perseverance had re-established peace.

The joy of bringing about such reconciliations was often renewed. My father's belief in the better side of human nature, combined with a rare tact and unwearied patience, enabled him frequently to close long-standing quarrels.

This chapter would not be complete without a reference to my father's views and practice in the matter of giving. In this particular, as in many others, he followed scrupulously his father's example. He had made it an invariable custom to give away one-tenth of his whole income; and how he dealt with “windfalls” may be gathered from the following extract. “Last Sunday, —, Esq., at whose house I slept after attending the missionary meeting, kindly put a sovereign in my hand. As I lay on my bed reflecting on his generous kindness to a stranger, I thought it would not be right to allow *myself* to be enriched by anything presented to me when I attended missionary meetings; and so next day, on returning home, your dear mother and I agreed that it should be added to our domestic offering (the ‘domestic offering’ was a large mahogany missionary box, with two mouths, one of which was fed with small daily offerings, and the other, at intervals, on birthdays and special occasions, with larger thankofferings), making altogether £6 10s. od. This is the way, my dear John, I am

*providing* for my family. I make the Lord my banker, and insure myself against bankruptcy." My father's views and practice ran on parallel lines. He did not fail to recognize the enormous difference in the relative value of tithe-giving as between rich and poor, but he considered a tenth God's due from all but the poverty-stricken. And he viewed that as the poor man's noble maximum of giving, the rich man's shabby minimum. His own giving was regulated by conscientious convictions. Of all that he received one-tenth was religiously set aside and put into the "charity bag." Of "windfalls" many were devoted to the Lord, not in one-tenths but in ten-tenths. One of his more recent acts of almsgiving only came to light at the time of his death. On first coming to Nottingham my father visited a poor man, who through sheer poverty had dropped out of membership. He invited him to his own class-meeting, and a very genuine Christian he proved. But more than spiritual consolation was needed. He was promised a loaf of bread every week. For six years the loaf was regularly supplied through the baker. Then my father's fatal illness seized him. When the poor man received his last loaf, he remarked, "I hope I shall be taken home before my good kind friend, for I don't know what I should do without him." It was the last loaf, for within a week the recipient died, and four days later his friend followed him. In such cases as these my father delighted.

The pathway to Connexional honours opened to him, but he turned aside from it. Twice he

declined important appointments because they would have involved the chairmanship of a district. He was essentially a pastor. Conference seldom saw him. Controversy and burning questions troubled his spirit. When, late in life, he was elected to the Legal Hundred on the ground of seniority, he attended regularly, but from duty rather than of choice. He was, in truth, no knight-errant. He preferred rather to bide by the King's side, and take his “chance of noble deeds.”





## CHAPTER VII.

### HOME GLIMPSES.

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A MAN'S shrewdest critics are his own children. He may be a great man to the world, or a holy man ; they know every weakness. The public sees his life work, pattern side uppermost ; they see the other side. The pattern may be reversible or it may not. It may present on the inner side, though in different colours, the same beautiful design, or it may be a tangle of thread-ends. The testimony of a professor of entire sanctification was discussed on a certain occasion. Said a lady present, "He may be entirely sanctified in the newspapers, but he isn't entirely sanctified if you saw him at home."

Enough has already been said of my father's earlier ministry to indicate his earnestness and devotion to public duties. Dare I turn up a corner and show the reverse side? It is the purpose of this chapter to attempt it ; to display frankly in a series of home glimpses the hidden side of a character which, in its outward aspects, was singularly rich in all Christian graces. It is natural that these glimpses should begin with marriage.

My father's marriage was an act of sweet revenge. He possessed himself of the daughter of the supernumerary minister whose caustic comment on hearing him the first time was, "He will

never set the Thames on fire." The young preacher had barely entered upon his ministerial probation when his father, viewing from afar the inevitable crisis which would make or mar his usefulness, was already making it a matter of special prayer. He wrote to him, "It is too early yet to think or speak about courtship; its dangers are great, its hazards many, and none are safe but those who do really and sincerely obey the universal directory and promise, 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.' My anxious prayer for you in this matter will beforehand anticipate your thoughts and desires. I cannot tell you how much I long for your happiness and prosperity of every sort, both in this life and in the world to come."

And certainly it seemed that the anticipatory prayer of the far-seeing father was graciously heard. At the time my father became an accepted candidate for the ministry, the Rev. Henry Young Cheverton retired from full work. It was a question whether he would settle as a supernumerary minister at Salisbury or at Bath. The pestilence of 1850 decided the matter. Salisbury was cholera stricken, and at the last moment the choice fell on Bath. A few months later my father's period of "supply" at Leeds closed. Various openings were successively blocked, and finally, to his dismay, he was sent to Bath to occupy the difficult position of substitute for a suspended minister, whose suspension had created a tempest of indignation. At Bath, in the course of the year, his father visited him, and was introduced

to Miss Cheverton. "What do you think of her, father?" was a natural question. "It won't do, John," was the reply, "she is too delicate." But he went home and reported confidently, "I have seen John's wife." Between the supernumerary and the young preacher a warm friendship quickly sprang up. The supernumerary's daughter was inscrutable. What she thought of the "supply" she kept to herself. In the centre of the garden a fine mulberry tree grew. Many a half hour the preacher spent in wrapt thought under its branches. The fallen fruit he ate thankfully; the fruit upon the boughs he would never touch. But it struck him as a curious phenomenon, upon which he remarked, that the finest berries fell first. He did not know till years after that just before his visits a demure girl plucked and scattered on the sward the tree's choicest produce. In subsequent visits to Bath, after he had left the Circuit, my father's intimacy with the Cheverton family was renewed. Presently, what his father had so long foreseen, he himself realized. The maiden of the mulberry-tree held his heart. After earnest prayer he wrote to her. At the exact hour he was writing she was praying, under a strong presentiment that the morning's post would bring that very letter. She was an only child; could she leave her parents? And dare she, reserved and shy by nature, face the duties of a preacher's wife? Love won the day, and on April 21st, 1855, John V. B. Shrewsbury was married to Henrietta Moon Cheverton in the Walcot Chapel, Bath.

The marriage was a singularly happy one. On my mother's part the union was cemented by a reverent love that rarely ventured upon even a kindly jest ; on my father's by a tender and watchful protection. How perfect the union was one fact will sufficiently attest. From the beginning of their married life to its close, forty-two years later, husband and wife united daily in private prayer. To jarring souls such a practice would be an intolerable affliction. It was not so with my father. The union in prayer was the beautiful expression of a perfect concord, and it tallies with the fact that ransacking my memory I can recall no single instance of a dispute between my father and mother, notwithstanding the quick temper of the one and the undemonstrative pertinacity of the other. As the children merged one by one from childhood, it dawned upon us that over and above the scrupulously observed hours of family worship, there was a season of secret midday prayer. It used to be a puzzle why father and mother were always shut up in the study immediately after dinner, and strict orders given that under no pretext were they to be disturbed. In due course the secret was disclosed. To this day I feel the thrill that ran through me when first I was permitted to be present in that mysterious chamber at that mysterious hour. It was a revelation to find that every day each child's name was breathed in prayer ; that the little weaknesses and faults of each one of us were tenderly detailed to the Almighty, and His aid invoked for us. That my father should pray for us

in the lump •at family worship seemed perfectly natural ; that he and my mother should thus plead for us individually, gave a new and enlarged conception of their tender love for their children, and of their oneness with each other.

The influence of this perfect fellowship upon my father's public work can hardly be measured, but it was very great. None but preachers themselves fully understand the strain of a preacher's work—the nervous reluctance that often goes before preaching, the nervous reaction that succeeds it ; the sleepless nights following excited meetings ; the painful dealings with men who, if not wicked, are frequently unreasonable ; the difficulty of preserving a sympathetic impartiality where party feeling runs high. Apart altogether from the ordinary labour of ministerial duty, these form special burdens that fall more or less heavily upon all preachers, burdens rendered many times heavier if, as in my father's case, the preacher should have a highly strung and sensitive nature. For these cares he found a true sedative in his home life. Its unruffled calm permitted him to concentrate his thought and energy without distraction upon his public work. Of home anxieties there were many, of home friction, none. And in this peaceful atmosphere the preacher recruited his strength and gathered new energy.

Yes, the home cares were many indeed. The bringing up of six sons and six daughters involved inevitably many an anxious period. In earlier years, when his children were few, my father's brothers and sisters received generous help. In

later years, when his children were many, he cherished his aged parents with filial devotion. The burdens of home life far outweighed at times the heaviest burden of ministerial duty. But wifely courage and devotion and patience never failed. The hands that strewed the lawn with the finest mulberries, strewed my father's path with life's choicest blessings.

It will be gathered, from what has been said, that prayer was the mainstay of the home. Nothing was ever allowed to interfere with family worship. When my father was absent my mother discharged the duty. It was never shirked, yet it was carried through with evident nervousness, and by the aid of a book of prayers. But there came one day when a curious hesitancy and marked tremulousness arrested attention, and quickly the whisper passed from child to child, "She's praying without the book." And the little volume never appeared again. When both parents were absent the trusty domestic became priestess of the family altar. She was herself a product of prayer. When my father was living in the large rambling preacher's house at Holbeck it seemed impossible to procure a servant. Trade was good, and girls preferred the independence of the factory to the bonds of service. The matter was dealt with in the midday petitions. The next day an awkward Holbeck girl presented herself. "I heer'd ye were wantin' t' engage a lass," she said. "What can you do?" "I reckon I can do nowt unless I'm telled, but I'm willin' to larn." And learn she did. She remained for sixteen years, and

left amidst tears to go abroad for her health's sake. To this day she is remembered with affectionate gratitude.

My father believed implicitly in the Scripture, "Ask, and she shall receive." In the early years of his ministry, when preacher's incomes were very slender, and his resources taxed to the utmost, he found himself on one occasion without money to last the week out. Debt he abhorred. To borrow was hateful. Husband and wife laid the matter before the Lord. The next day a gentleman, who was an entire stranger, called. With some hesitancy he made known the reason of his visit. He hoped my father would not feel hurt, but he felt an unaccountable impulse to offer him aid, and so saying he placed in his hands a ten-pound note.

Sometimes this unwavering belief in Divine Providence led my father into acts which afterwards he regarded as credulous rather than trustful. In earlier years, on rare occasions, when sorely perplexed, he would open the Bible at random, and expect to find suitable guidance in the first text his glance rested upon. But once, when not only perplexed but greatly irritated also, he sought direction thus, he opened upon the words, "Then Peter began to curse and to swear." From that time he never used the Bible again in any haphazard way.

In another direction this implicit faith revealed itself. Occasionally offences were committed by an undiscoverable offender. The offence might be trifling, but the denial of it could not be passed

over. In a few instances, in order to bring the guilt home to the actual culprit, recourse was had to the drawing of lots. The children assembled, my father would pray that the disposal of the lot might be from God. Then slips of paper were drawn, one by each individual present, and the offender was to be detected by the drawing of a marked paper. On the last occasion of using this ordeal the lot fell upon my mother. This was disconcerting. There had clearly been some flaw in the method. Prayer was offered again, and the lots were drawn afresh. At the second drawing, when the papers were examined, my father himself was found to be in possession of the damning slip. This was a death-blow to the ordeal. It left his belief in Divine Providence unaffected, but he deduced the lesson that it was true faith to trust the Lord to answer His children's prayers in His own way, and a mistaken faith to force a method of response upon the Lord and expect Him to honour it.

Sundays at home were always happy days. My father believed in making the Sabbath the most cheerful day of all the week. Sunday cooking was tabooed. He held that in families where a hot dinner could be enjoyed by all the members any day of the week, the economy of labour effected by cold joints should be effected on the Sabbath. But special dishes were always prepared on the Saturday for Sabbath consumption. The pastry was richer than usual, the allowance of cakes and sweets and fruit more liberal. So long as greediness was



eschewed, we were taught to regard the Sabbath as a feast day, holy unto the Lord, distinguished by exceptional privileges, both for soul and body. At breakfast a text was invariably required from each member of the family, and a word of praise given to the most appropriate passage stimulated Bible study. Sometimes the irrepressible sauciness of childhood would break forth on these occasions. "When my father and my mother forsake me then the Lord will take me up," was the passage solemnly drawled out by one boy, after a week of frequent and probably richly-merited punishment.

On another Sunday, when my father's eldest brother, Jeremiah, was present a little fellow of six chimed forth, "Jeremiah, what seest thou?" Such outbursts were passed over in amused silence. In the afternoon "Father's Bible lesson" was the special attraction, and very precious to this day is the memory of those Sabbath lessons.

Tea-time on the last day of the year was always a special occasion. My father produced then his pocket book, and beginning with the first of January, and turning page by page, recounted all the special mercies of the year.

For a period of thirty years the whole family gathered at Christmas in the old home. The last gathering was held at Rawtenstall in 1890. There were present father and mother, six sons, six daughters, one daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren. Death had made no break in the circle. The place was hallowed by the associations of half a century earlier. It was felt by all that such a

gathering was a beautiful climax to the long series. It was resolved not to attempt another. We parted with unbroken ranks. The next gathering can only be in the Heavenly dwelling-places. God grant that the ranks may be found unbroken again.

Looking back to those years of home-life, the personality of my father stands out in clear and beautiful relief. Not, indeed, as altogether faultless ; nervous irritability, quickness of temper, hastiness of speech—vague memories of such things cross my mind, but as surface faults only. They were the earthen vessel, apart from which the excellency of the treasure would have been less conspicuous. What I am particularly struck by is, first of all, my father's absolute impartiality. To this day I cannot say which of his twelve children he loved best ; and he loved none of them least. And next I wonder at his cheerfulness. He was constitutionally of a morbid temperament. It is pathetic to read the frequent brief jottings in his pocket books, which betray the seasons of intense depression through which he passed. Yet his children saw little of it. The painful sense of personal unworthiness which tormented him in his youth clung to him to the end, and the bitter experiences of life filled him often with mournful musings on the mystery of Providence. Yet he never lost his faith in the reality of Providence, and in his moments of deepest self-abasement the lines—

“ Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling,”

gave him unfailing comfort.

This chapter began with marriage ; it shall close with a note about grand-children. How gracious he was with them ! taking the little ones on his knees, and smiling down upon them whilst they clutched his long white beard with baby fingers ; walking the streets of Nottingham with his little grand-daughter—a perfect and exquisite picture of age and childhood ; preaching in Leeds to a large congregation of young people, with his hand upon the head of his eldest grand-son, John. One little thing that grand-son especially remembers. “ Look, grandfather,” he said on the occasion of my father’s last visit, “ isn’t our Eric a bonny little baby ? ” “ Yes,” he replied, “ he is. *See, my dear boy, if you can’t be the first to teach him the name of Jesus.* ” They were his last words to John.

I have held up in these fragmentary details the hidden side of my father’s character. If it is correctly portrayed, it should appear that the pattern was truly reversible. Whatever beauty it had viewed from the standpoint of the public, it manifested equal beauty to those who were privileged to know it by sweet home glimpses.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### A SUPERINTENDENT'S BURDENS.

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THE position of a superintendent minister my father shrank from. He would gladly have remained the second or third preacher, or have filled even a young man's place, if it might have been so. But he was already qualified by years of accumulated experience to fill the higher position, and the Connexion needed his services. At Hackney he assumed the responsibility for the first time, and during the next twenty-four years he had the oversight of some of the most important circuits in Methodism. Looking back over the record of those years the amount of work he did in extinguishing debts, building new chapels, dividing circuits, and grappling with long-standing problems, is surprising. Many of these tasks, indeed, could be classed as works of supererogation. They were not obligatory. A superintendent might congratulate himself if he left his circuit in as good a condition as he found it. But my father could never content himself with this. The same Quixotic strain in his character which impelled him to attempt the rescue of apparently hopeless characters, impelled him to wrestle with apparently hopeless circuit problems. The ordinary cares of a superintendent form no small burden. He is responsible for the

yearly nomination of all the leaders and stewards in the circuit; he is the official chairman of every Trustees' meeting; he is answerable to the Conference for the making and receiving and forwarding of all Connexional collections; he has the planning of all the preachers in the circuit, a difficult and often a most delicate task.

"See," said a superintendent to me once, "What am I to do? Here is a letter from Brother —, saying, 'Please give me some appointments to —;' and here by the same post I have a letter from the society stewards at —, saying, 'Who ever you send us, don't send Mr. —, for we won't have him.'"

Again, the superintendent must furnish the District Synod with an accurate return of all the members, members on trial and junior members in his circuit, showing exactly the exact source of all gains and losses; he must report the sums received for all Connexional funds, and the state of all Trust properties; and for every schedule filled up and forwarded to Connexional authorities he must see that a duplicate entry is correctly made in the circuit books; and whenever anything goes wrong, —and what circuit is there in which every year something does not go wrong somewhere?—he must be the general referee. On the whole, there is something to be said for the superintendent who, having fulfilled all these duties, in addition to his preaching, pastoral visitation, meeting of classes, and presiding at endless committees, hesitates to plunge into other work outside his routine. There

might even be some excuse made for preachers, if superintendents, traditionally reputed to carry a three years' pile of sermons, and to use them in the fashion of an egg-boiler by a simple process of reversal. My father, however, was not of that cast. A circuit debt put him upon his mettle. An opening for a new cause roused all his enthusiasm, and if he found a tangle in the circuit administration he could not rest until he had completely unravelled it. A rapid survey of the tasks he undertook and carried through in the eight circuits he superintended will give those who understand all that is involved some idea of the burdens he bore.

At Hackney, the building of the Cassland Road Chapel, Homerton, and the establishment of a second school for Ministers' daughters at Clapton, for which he acted as Corresponding Secretary. At Croydon, the remodelling of the interior of Tamworth Road Chapel, the building of a large chapel at South Norwood, and the division of the circuit.

This represented six years of incessant and painstaking work—continual meetings with trustees and building committees, ceaseless correspondence, the settling of frequent disputes between men whose ideas of chapel building and ecclesiastical furniture were of the most diverse nature ; the contriving of means for raising money, and arrangement of opening services. At the end of this period my father shuddered at the very term chapel scheme. He had thrown his whole soul into the schemes already completed, and they had been carried to a

successful termination, but he longed for leisure for more profound meditation upon God's word, and for more extended pastoral oversight of the Societies. He declined at this time an invitation to Swansea, because the appointment was likely to involve the chairmanship of the District, and accepted thankfully a call to the Glasgow, Claremont Street Circuit. But prior to accepting it he made a definite stipulation with the circuit officials. He was to be relieved from all anxiety about the circuit finance ; the treasurership of all Connexional funds was to be undertaken by lay members of the circuit, and he was to be free from all responsibilities except those properly belonging to the preacher and pastor. The conditions were agreed to by the circuit, and faithfully kept. My father was prompted in making this compact by a strong feeling that the burdens of a superintendent minister, the load of anxiety about the purely material and temporal concerns of the Church, simply suffocated the evangelist in him. He recognised the necessity of such work, and when it had to be undertaken he faced it resolutely, but after a spell of six years of it he longed for a period of purely ministerial duty. And in no circuit was he so happy in his work as during his pastorate of the Glasgow Claremont Street Church. He enjoyed thoroughly having one congregation to preach to, and the concentration of pastoral attention upon one Church. His ministry at Glasgow was fruitful in conversions. For weeks together souls were saved at the Sunday evening services, and on one memorable occasion the whole

choir entered the enquiry room. Yet even here he could not overlook the opportunity of extension work. He saw in a small mission room the nucleus of another church. He fostered it carefully. He secured a second minister for the growing society, and in due time the outcome was the building of a large and handsome chapel at Partick.

From Glasgow to Birmingham, Islington was the next move ;—from quiet pastoral work, to take up again the manifold responsibilities of a large circuit. A great debt crippled it. That was cleared off, a substantial balance left on the other side of the account, and the way paved for a division of the circuit.

But the most difficult task of all arose in the next circuit, Hull, Waltham Street. The chapel affairs of this circuit presented a unique condition of things. All the different properties were held on a general trust. It was unmethodistic, and it involved many serious inconveniences. But to abolish a long-standing usage, and to create a separate trust for each property was an undertaking at once difficult and intricate. Moreover, strong prejudices had to be combated. Previous superintendents had looked into the matter, and shut their eyes again. Indeed, an ex-President went so far as to say that the man who seriously tackled the problem would wreck his reputation upon it. This problem my father set himself to wrestle with. A disorderly state of things, whether in domestic or ecclesiastical affairs, he could not tolerate. The



work was arduous, and required unlimited patience and much tact, but it was carried through, and when my father left the circuit every chapel property had been secured upon an independent trust, and a new chapel had been built at Anlaby. The superintendent's reputation was not wrecked, but the burden of this task told severely upon his health. He declined the charge of another large town circuit, and accepted thankfully an invitation to the quiet little seaside town of Filey. But even in this retired spot there was need of a wise superintendent's oversight. Clerical intolerance in the villages had to be reckoned with. The opposition was bitter and determined. In one instance a Methodist rented the old hall in a village, and was a mainstay of the Society. The rector wrote to the landlord that if he would give his tenant notice he could provide another tenant, a good Churchman. The plot failed. The landlord replied that he was perfectly satisfied with his tenant, but that in any case when there was a change in occupancy he should not require the rector's assistance.

In another instance it was found almost impossible to find a site for a chapel. The circumstances under which a Methodist place of worship was set up in this village are very interesting. I cannot do better than give an account in my father's own words:—

“In the year 1885, wearied with the care of large circuits, and especially with the difficulties and strain of Hull, Waltham Street Circuit, I refused an invitation to yet another big town, and elected to

retire to the charming retreat of Filey. There I met with a sympathetic and spirited people, though few in number. I greatly enjoyed the week-night preaching, prayer-meeting and class, which, through a previous sectional treatment of the circuit, I had to myself. I gained in weight, strength, and gladness, while I rambled in study, prayer, and praise, now upon the unrivalled sands, then upon the commanding and exhilarating cliffs, and oft-times upon one of the finest sea walks in the world.

“At my first quarterly meeting, in the Filey Circuit, I was somewhat amused to discover that the inhabitants all told did not number more than the membership of my late circuit. At this meeting the question was asked, ‘Can anything be done to secure a chapel for Muston?’

“Muston is a village about a mile and a half from Filey. When the question of a chapel was mooted in the quarterly meeting, a generous brother, who was a butcher, suggested that we should try to purchase of Mr. — a certain wooden chapel, which stood disused on the South Cliff, Scarborough, having been superseded by an imposing Gothic structure. The suggestion was accompanied with a promise of a subscription towards the purchase.

“The owner of the South Cliff ex-chapel, Mr. Meggitt, lived at Hunmanby, a picturesque village, three miles from Filey. He was a Methodist of the third generation. His grandfather's house had been Wesley's home. Charged with messages of love from some of his former Hull members, I entered

‘The Villa,’ Hunmanby, and found myself in the presence of a fine old English gentleman.

“Our Methodist friend had retired, after hard toil, to well-earned repose, first to Scarborough and now to Hunmanby. At my second interview, with a generosity that was natural, and which was accentuated by grace, he gave me the Scarborough chapel for the use of Methodism in Muston.

“Two difficulties were now encountered, how to get the chapel to Muston, and where to place it. We had decided which was the best site ; but how to get it was the puzzle. We accosted the owner of the desired site in one of his fields, and put the matter before him. He was churchwarden. After weighing the gravity of our request for some time, he said, “It’s too gain the church.” We assured him that we should not hurt the church, and that, as Methodists, we were ‘the friends of all, the enemies of none.’ Although we asked him to pray over the matter, we could not gain his consent. But he promised to call a meeting of the Muston villagers, and try to obtain for us a piece of common land opposite ‘The Lodge.’ The meeting was called, and by a vote of five to one the land was voted to us. Our Primitive Methodist friends generously helped to swell the majority. Alas ! the meeting was in vain. Legal advice informed us that the lord of the manor alone could grant the land.

“ I wrote thereupon to the lord of the manor, and told him of the vote of the villagers, and enclosed a copy of their resolution. I received a curt refusal.

“ We next sought to purchase a portion of a sand pit at the other end of the village. But the terms asked were so high that an agreement was impossible. Here was a plight to be in. We had a chapel, but there ‘was no room for it’ in the village.

“ In our extremity, we returned to Farmer Foster, the churchwarden, and eventually he agreed to rent us the land, if the cottager, who was then using it as a garden, would consent. Our interview with the tenant was a success, and the site which we first desired was ours.

“ But now the chapel had to be transferred ; but how ? Captain Huntley and I and a friend at Scarborough held a prayer-meeting in the deserted sanctuary, and then set our wits to work. We agreed it would injure it much to take it to pieces. The ingenious Captain suggested that we should lift it bodily out of the ground, place it upon a prepared carriage, and convey it by road to Muston. Accordingly we requisitioned the services of Mr. Gardiner, a worthy Methodist wheelwright, and the carriage was made to order.

“ Day by day, by slow processes, and with mechanical applications, the house of prayer was raised and deposited, unharmed, with consummate skill upon its novel carriage. So far so good. But now the problem was, how about the locomotion ? This was solved, in the first instance, by Mr. Coleman, of Flotmanby, who sent over as splendid a team of horses as any farmer could wish to have. They were duly yoked to the carriage. But, just as

the whole structure was moved across the road, a number of bystanders broke into a loud cheer, the horses became demoralized, and pulled divers ways; the axles snapped, and the noble animals had to return without their burden. Providentially for us, the breakdown was at the side of the road, so that vehicles could pass. Meanwhile, snow began to fall, and, by order of the Local Board, we had to have a man in charge by day and night. All these things, which seemed to be against us, were working for us. For six weeks our caretaker's fire and night lamps advertised us well.

“At the end of six weeks the snow cleared away, and, by the aid of a steam traction engine, the little sanctuary started on its way. I remember the joy with which I walked on four miles to meet it, and how the snorting of the approaching engine was music in my ears. Yet another disappointment: when about half-way the engine broke down, and our chapel was again stranded on the road-side, but, as before, in a most convenient spot.

“The next day the repaired engine was again attached, and Filey was reached, and the doxology was sung at the base of the hill, leading past the station.

“The said hill had been newly macadamized, and the engine showed signs of failing power. Immediately, a number of fishermen brought powerful hawsers and attached them, and many willing hands, my own included, helped the engine onwards until the destination of the chapel-on-wheels was reached. Standing upon the carriage, I

held a short out-door service with a hearty congregation.

“The chapel was now on its resting place, after its nine miles’ journey. Some old seats that had formerly done duty on the Scarborough Spa were covered with crimson repp, so that by the time new lamps were introduced and other adornments, the little place looked as smart as a drawing-room.

“Of course, all this meant considerable expense. But subscriptions flowed in freely. On the opening day, although snow was upon the ground, and the cold was intense, the chapel was crowded in the afternoon, when the superintendent preached. We then repaired to a granary, where a sumptuous tea was prepared. At the close of the meeting, which was afterwards held in the granary, dimly lighted with oil lamps and candles, we found that we had more than met all our expenses, and were able to present Filey with £5 towards the extinction of a debt upon its chapel clock.

“I was now able to write to the lord of the manor, and to inform him that we had secured a better site than the one he had denied us, and to add my belief that the time was coming when we should obtain by law what we ought to obtain by courtesy,—sites for our chapels.

“The little sanctuary became a general favourite. A handsome Bible and Hymn Book, a Communion Service and Book of Offices, a Library, and other gifts were cheerfully bestowed. Missionary meetings and harvest thanksgivings were introduced, and a most vigorous Band of Hope was established.

“ For many a year this village was prayed for as a ‘dark corner of the earth.’ Now it is radiant with the light and brightness of God’s salvation.

“ Financially, the village chapel has been a great success. From 1879 to 1885 the total return for class and ticket money was £14 5s. 4d., an average of about £2 8s. a year. The income has been, since the introduction of the chapel, about £28 a year. Including missionary and chapel anniversaries, harvest thanksgiving, and sundry other collections not made before, about £59 per annum are raised. For about £6 a year the place is kept going.

“ The chair which has been filled by worthy chairmen, at meetings in the chapel, is one in which Mr. Wesley was wont to sit in the house of the grandfather of the donor of the chapel. On one occasion, when Mr. Wesley had outlived persecution and was now popular, a fine lady desired to entertain him. ‘Where do my preachers go?’ he asked of his companion. ‘To Mr. ——.’ ‘Then I shall go there too.’ A footman was despatched from the lady’s to bring him to dinner. He would not budge from the aforementioned chair, but replied, ‘Love me, love my dog.’ ”

From Filey my father went to Rawtenstall. Again he was confronted with financial difficulties. The chapel trusts were heavily burdened. He could not endure the idea of God’s House being in debt. “Three things I hate,” he often said, “dirt, debt, and the devil.” A sum of nearly £3,000 was required. The amount was raised, and without the

aid of that financial bugbear, a bazaar. The question of bazaars versus subscription lists was carefully gone into. It was felt on all sides that a bazaar was in many cases an ingenious and subtle contrivance to induce a few willing-hearted people to give goods and purchase their gifts. A broader method of raising money was decided upon. The state of things was put before every family connected with chapels in need, with a request that each family would put by, week by week, during a year, some small sum towards the extinction of the debts. The method worked well. The people responded nobly ; collectors were appointed to call, as desired, weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Many a working class family subscribed five pounds during the twelve months. Public teas and suppers swelled the amount. By the end of the year the debts had vanished, and a scheme had been matured also for building a new chapel in one of the country places.

From Rawtenstall my father moved to Nottingham, Halifax Place. It was his last Circuit. His health was failing. Repeated attacks of bronchitis had undermined it. He had no longer the vigour and elasticity of earlier years. Yet once again his spirit was stirred. Halifax Place was one of those huge town chapels, which have been regarded as the white elephants of modern Methodism. A small congregation, and a debt of nearly a thousand pounds fired the veteran superintendent's enthusiasm. Again he began to plan and scheme, and as a result the debt was extinguished, the circuit divided,



and Halifax Place transformed into a mission centre.

It will readily be understood that no man could carry through all the schemes summarized in these pages without meeting opposition and running the risk of making enemies. My father never spared himself, and he was exacting in his expectations of what others should do. Prepared on his own part to give until the "charity bag" threatened to swallow up the "household purse," he had no sympathy, and sometimes little patience, with stinginess in any form. He shamed many a one, by the force of his own example, into reluctant doing and giving. It was not a popular rôle to play. Ministers who did less and expected less were better beloved by the indolent and ungenerous, and such form an appreciable percentage of even Methodist congregations. It was his misfortune to possess a temperament which was singularly sensitive to criticism, though he never swerved from the path he felt to be the right one on account of it. Above and beyond everything he valued the praise of God. That was sunshine to him. The hostile criticism of men who disliked being raised out of the ruts, was but as particles of grit or dirt in comparison. Yet a particle of grit in the eye closes it for a while to the sunshine.

My father's public work was done. He could not have undertaken evening services and meetings through another winter except at the peril of his life. And he had no desire to die in harness. He longed rather for a few years in which, untram-

melled by circuit worries, he might give himself to study, and peaceful meditation, and correspondence with and visits amongst his children and friends, and to thoughtful preparation for another world. With a thankful sigh of relief he laid down a superintendent's burdens, and turned his face towards the setting sun.



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE WELL SPRINGS OF INFLUENCE.

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THAT my father exercised a very gracious influence wherever he went many will bear witness. That influence never waned. His last public act was to take part in the Covenant Service in the Tennyson Street Chapel, Nottingham, on the Sunday but one before his death. The congregation felt in that last service of his ministerial life a gracious power resting upon him and communicated through him. I have described the soul-winning results of his early ministry. I add now by way of comparison an incident of his closing years. In 1896 he visited me at Leeds, and was with me on "Children's Sunday" (October 18th). He spoke to the young people in the New Wortley Sunday School that afternoon. Many of them will never forget the address,—so simple, so earnest, so heart-touching. It resulted in the conversion of several. The following year it was my earnest desire that he should be with us again on Children's Sunday. We were entering upon a Sunday school mission, and I knew that his influence would be of incalculable good. Unfortunately it could not be. Uncertain health made it impossible for him to travel. But that afternoon, and during the evening service, I spoke under the spell of unusual influence.

Reminding the school of our disappointment, I said, "I have no doubt my father is praying for us just now." That day between fifty and sixty children, elder scholars, and teachers were converted. On comparing notes afterwards I found that at the very hour I was pleading with the young people to stand up for Jesus, my father and mother were praying together, and praying especially for our service at New Wortley.

A volume of my father's early sermons in manuscript lies before me together with many outlines of later ones; his published sermons, "Sabbath Morning Meditations on the First Epistle of Peter," "One by One," "Messages of Mercy," have been given to the world. Off-hand criticism might adjudge them in nowise remarkable, and indeed the best part has evaporated. These sermons are not pictures, equally beautiful whether the artist be present or absent, they are rather pages of music, marvellous when interpreted to the ear by the composer's touch, conveying far less when judged by sight only. I do not believe my father ever attempted to make a great discourse. Apart from his eager gestures, and persuasive tones, and impassioned earnestness, half the charm of his sermons is gone. Heard as they fell, living, loving messages from the preacher's lips, they cast a spell upon the hearers. And the secret of their influence was simply this, they were steeped in prayer.

A gentleman remarked to me the other day, "I remember when your father was in this circuit (it was nearly forty years ago) he said to me about a

sermon we were discussing, 'I have been *agonizing* all night over that sermon.' I was much struck with the word, and never forgot it." To my father, as a Greek scholar, the word had a special and familiar meaning. He had been wrestling the night through with the Almighty for a message to dying men. That was the first great well-spring of his influence. He was a man of prayer, and his sermons were redolent of its incense. How well I remember the inevitable post-script in all the letters received from him in my boyhood, "Remember Matt. vi. 6." It was advice prompted by the richness of his own experience.

The next source of his influence was *tact*. He was in touch with all sinful and sorrowful souls, and not less in touch with the buoyant life of young people. In this respect he travelled considerably beyond the stern puritanism of his father, and he exercised a proportionately greater influence. He recognised the need of recreation, and sympathised with young people in their games as well as in their conflicts and difficulties. An early photograph represents him playing chess with a young man who had been converted under his preaching. To his father chess was a delusion of the devil to ensnare unwary souls. It may have been in reference to this very picture that he wrote:—"I do not think it is worth while that you and I should have a controversy about a game at chess. I still say that there are three things I hate to see in a Christian's house—the chess-board, the pipe, and the spirit bottle."

To the second and third articles on this *index expurgatorius* my father maintained to the end of life his father's hatred. But notwithstanding the intensity of his filial reverence he kept his own opinion as to chess, and his sympathy with young people in their amusements won for him their confidence, and opened the way to lead them to higher things.

This tact was won by experience. It seems to have been absent in the beginning of his ministry at Sheffield. He had the temerity to deliver from the pulpit a terrible indictment of ladies' fashions, and of social gatherings. It raised a storm of indignation, and in one instance to an act of good humoured revenge. He called during the week following to see his superintendent. In the adjoining garden a young lady who had smarted under the sermon was watering the flowers. When she perceived her enemy, as she accounted him, standing at the other side of the hedge, she promptly directed the hose upon him, and with such accuracy of aim that the preacher was obliged to beat an immediate retreat. His ardour for promulgating sumptuary laws from the pulpit was effectually damped. It may be that that hose-pipe did life-long service. He learnt in that very circuit that high spirits and innocent recreation could co-exist with intense devotion, and when he left he was the hero of the young people. It was a memorable service, when in response to his earnest appeal to young men in Carver Street Chapel, every young man stood up to declare his decision for God. The

organist was one of the number. A few months later he was drowned in Lake Windermere, but the intervening period was one of the happiest religious experience. Many life-long friendships were cemented in those days between my father and the families of the Sheffield, Carver Street, congregation. The unique and indescribable kindness of one family in particular, expressed in deeds of ever widening generosity through all subsequent years, has laid three generations under a debt of deepest gratitude.

To the end of his life my father maintained his sympathy with young people. He believed that the prosperity of any Church depended very largely upon its cherishing and putting into operation the religious ardour of its young men. He did not hesitate to appoint men who, on account of their youth were sometimes frowned down upon, to positions of responsibility when he recognised in them a genuine earnestness. He believed thoroughly in the old paths, but he cordially disliked those paths being furrowed with deep ruts. And in several cases where he found the wheels labouring heavily, he mended matters by pressing into the service of the Church the sanctified enthusiasm of its young people.

This readiness of sympathy made my father's influence especially valuable in the class-meeting and in his visitation of the sick. He abhorred regulation experiences, fashioned after the manner of a melodeon stencil, and like it, giving always the same sound. He looked for freshness, naturalness,

and spontaneity in the class-meeting, and he had a way of making the most timid members feel perfectly at home. And in the sick-room his presence was a benediction. There could be no doubt on the part of the sufferer by whose bedside he prayed that the petitions offered were not simply prompted by a faithful pastor's sense of right; they were the outpouring of a soul that lived habitually in an atmosphere of prayer, the supplication of a prophet, who was on terms of reverent intimacy with the God from whom he received his commission to "comfort them that mourn in Zion." And that the sorrows of the people were not officially borne, that the pastor's prayer was not only the passing duty of the moment, I can testify as I recall how again and again he remembered at his own family altar the sicknesses and sorrows of the people to whom he ministered.

Yes, *tact* was certainly one of the well-springs of influence. Sympathy with the sorrowful and sinful; sympathy with buoyant youth as well as with burdened age. The practical outcome of this sympathy was the restoration of scores to the Church, who, through poverty or neglect, or some carefully nursed grievance, had fallen out of the ranks. With the avaricious and lazy, and with confirmed grumblers, my father had no sympathy, and here his tact displayed itself in apt reproof. "I wish I were a Methody parson," said a rough young fellow to him once, "three or four pound a week for doing nowt! I'd preach plenty of sermons for twenty bob apiece."



“If you are a man of your word,” was the reply, “you mean what you say. If you are not, you are not worth arguing with. I will give you *thirty* shillings if you will preach once in my stead next Sunday.” But the young man preserved a discreet silence.

Prayer and tact, and I should add perseverance, these were the well-springs of a far-reaching influence which made my father’s ministry rich in holy results. The genius that glows in unexpected presentments of truth, or fascinating exuberance of phrase ; the sparkle and play of an ever-wakeful wit ; the depths of profound scholarship ; the torrential eloquence of the born orator,—such gifts are for the very few. But prayer and tact and perseverance are field flowers, which whoso will may gather. And if this record has any value, it is on this ground especially,—that it is the record of a life the beauty and fragrance of which are possible to all. There were no hidden cisterns from which my father derived his influence, no sealed wells. He drew from those perennial springs that lie ever open to humble souls.



## CHAPTER X.

### SUNSET AND AFTERGLOW.

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THE Wesleyan Conference of 1894 entered the following resolution upon the minutes :—  
“In granting the request of the Rev. John V. B. Shrewsbury to become a supernumerary, the Conference desires to place on record its high appreciation of his personal character, and of the faithful and valuable service he has rendered during an able and unwearied ministry of forty-five years. It cannot forget his untiring and successful labours in the vineyard of the Lord, his able and affectionate ministry of the word of God, and the influence of his pastoral intercourse with the members of the Church.”

The words of this resolution exactly express the nature of my father's work. Affectionate ministry of the word of God, and personal influence in pastoral intercourse, were distinguishing features of his life's service. He was not a Conference man. Ready to speak, and speaking readily when the occasion demanded it, he nevertheless preferred to be a silent spectator, watching with keen interest the drift of events. But his sympathies were undisguised, and he did not hesitate to express them. He was a fearless Radical, and believed heartily in a bold and aggressive policy. In his attitude to questions which touched the relations of ministers

and laymen this was especially marked. He believed in a full and frank recognition of the rights of the laity, and in reposing in them an unreserved confidence. The notes of one of his speeches in Conference on the order of Sessions lie before me. "Now that the question is raised," he exclaimed, "it ought to be settled once for all. Allow me, Mr. President and my brethren, to say this with the greatest distinctness, that we in this Pastoral Session *ought* to make a settlement, and *we can*. The simple and convenient order, to my mind, unquestionably is that the Representative Session should occupy the position formerly occupied by the Committees of Review. What bars the way? Only the election of the President and the filling up of vacancies in the Legal Hundred. Now bear with me when I say—except usage and sentiment there is no reason why we ministers should retain in our hands the nomination of a President, who is the President not of the Pastoral Session only, but of the entire and undivided Conference. He must be a minister. Is not that enough for us? So with the members of the Legal Conference."

It will thus be seen that my father was in the vanguard of reform. In other matters his views were equally pronounced. He believed in prophetesses. He would admit of no reason for any woman endowed with strong convictions and the gift of utterance being debarred by her sex from speaking either on the platform or from the pulpit. He was an early advocate of women's rights, and he maintained his views to the end.

In one matter my father left the permanent stamp of his influence upon Conference procedure. At the Sheffield Conference of 1889 his spirit was greatly stirred by the way in which the obituaries of ministers who had died during the year were received. Up to that year it had been the custom for the Secretary to read rapidly through the obituary notices forwarded from the various districts, the Conference representatives meanwhile listening with careless indifference, or chatting in very audible undertones. The attendance at that Session was invariably meagre. It was not within the power of human nature—even of ministerial nature—to give sustained attention to a score or two of notices, couched in conventional phraseology, and of necessity devoid of personal interest to the majority present. But to my father's sensitive feeling this listlessness was painful, and savoured of irreverence towards the sainted dead. On his initiation Conference adopted another method. A solemn memorial service was substituted for the barren reading of obituary notices. The roll of the dead was called over, whilst Conference listened in reverent silence. Brief testimonies were given to the character of ministers who had rendered signal service ; and the memory of others, equally faithful, if less distinguished, was embalmed in the printed minutes. A fruitless session was thus transformed into an impressive and inspiring service.

And now the time had come when my father felt that he himself was brought within a measurable distance of that hallowed death-roll. In the autumn

of 1894 he settled down in his last home. He chose a house in Balmoral Road, Nottingham. Its position exactly suited him. The Arboretum at one end of the road and the Forest at the other furnished him with meditation walks. He delighted to stroll, Bible in hand, amongst flowers and bushes and singing birds, reading together God's two books. His elder brother, Jeremiah, had become a supernumerary a year or two earlier, and lived but a short distance away. The two were inseparable companions. It was the joyous comradeship of boyhood again, chastened by the experience of three score years and ten.

So set the sun of my father's ministerial career, in a sky bright indeed, but not cloudless. His broken health, shattered by repeated attacks of bronchitis, domestic anxieties, and bereavement, brought much trouble into these closing years. His only surviving sister died suddenly, at a time when he himself was confined to his bed.

Within a short period there came tidings of the death of a step-brother under tragic circumstances.

Then his brother Jeremiah fell sick, and a lingering illness of some months preceded his death. The wrench was a terrible one.

My father was now the sole survivor of his generation. But these clouds grew radiant in the sunset hues. Every sorrow was a finger pointing forward to the tearless life ; every burden a fresh call to prayer. A man of prayer from his youth, in these days he seemed to emulate the old Puritan divines. He spent hours alone in rapt communion

with his Saviour, and his speech and manner bespoke the fact that he had climbed the steep track, and gained the heights whence afar the soul catches the gleam of the city of God.

Very beautiful was this afterglow. The light was waning, but gradually, and life's eventide was filled with a deep sweet calm. Yet, for all he dwelt much apart; his interest in the busy world around him remained unabated. He prayed more, he read none the less,—books, magazines, newspapers, everything that kept him in touch with modern thought and methods. His form was still erect, his blue eyes shot out the same keen glances; only the snow-white beard, and a certain something in his manner indescribable, ineffable, marked the hours of sundown and the spreading afterglow. How vividly I see him standing on the pavement outside his door on a sunny autumn morning, holding in his firm grasp the handlebar of my bicycle. "If I were two or three years younger," he exclaimed, "I think I should be tempted to learn." How his "good-bye" rings in my ears; how I see him again waving his hands to his children, and following them with affectionate and half envious looks as we glided down the street on noiseless tyres. When next I saw him he was all but voiceless, and death dews glistened on his brow.

But in that mellow light beyond sundown he was still working. When not prostrated by his old complaint he was preaching every Sunday; when unable to go out his pen was still active. Two small volumes of sermons, and many contributions

to the "Nottingham Methodist" and the "King's Highway," were the outcome of these two years and a half. His contributions to the latter call for more than a passing word. The "King's Highway" is a Methodist magazine devoted to the exposition of the doctrine of Scriptural holiness. For many years my father had been an ardent believer in the doctrine, and an untiring exponent of it. He delighted in any meeting or convention which aimed at giving it prominence. In his preaching he dwelt repeatedly upon consecration, and considered the call of God's people to a life of consecration as important as the call of sinners to repentance. But he recognised that the doctrine was not, speaking generally, a popular one, and he was not blind to the reasons why. The following is his last contribution on the subject. It was published in the April number of the "King's Highway" of this year, three months after his death, and is reprinted here by the kind permission of the editors :—

### THE AMIABILITY OF HOLINESS.

BY REV. J. V. B. SHREWSBURY.

"Amiability is often associated with weakness, particularly in the case of young men. To characterise anyone as 'an amiable young man' is to suggest an innocence not many degrees removed from imbecility.

"And there can be no doubt that in this age of boasted and boastful strength if a young man is only amiable he is greatly discounted and reckons for

but little. Simple goodness is regarded as very simple, and, to quote a modern phrase, is 'not good enough.' It brings to my mind a pious young fellow who was of weak intellect, and a cripple withal, who asked me to forward his case to Thomas Champness as a candidate for evangelistic work.

"Unless amiability is allied with strength in these days of telephones, microphones, and I know not what 'phones' next, it is 'passed by on the other side.'

"On the other hand, the most pronounced and pronouncing holiness without amiability is a jarring vexation, a very 'vanity of vanities.' A distinguished and humorous man, who has passed hence, described a certain person thus :

"'You see, he was a very kind, pleasant, large-hearted man ; but he obtained holiness, and then he became very disagreeable.'

"Now, it is possible to read increasing strictness, a lessened laxity and frivolity of manners, into the word 'disagreeable.' Still, it is painfully true that it is necessary to press upon followers after holiness the necessity of a holiness which will 'make them nice,' to quote Thomas Champness.

"There is one very dear brother known to us who so often in his addresses on holiness warns his hearers against 'nastiness,' as to lead one to think that he must have had a very special acquaintance with that particular quality in the past.

"Amiability and true holiness are inseparable. If 'perfect love casteth out fear,' the 'fear' which 'hath torment,' the torment or 'punishment' of the



finally condemned (comp. Matt. xxv. 46, in the Greek), then surely it 'casteth out' unamiability. Unamiability must bite the dust before 'perfect love,' if hell-tormenting 'fear' does. God be praised! The strong and homely 'casteth out' remains in the Revised Version. Out then with unamiability! Out with it! Out with the disturber of personal and social peace!

"Is there any room for unamiability in this finished description of holiness? We mean, of course, perfected holiness—holiness so perfect as to allow the grace of God to make the very best of a man in 'spirit and soul and body.' It 'suffereth long, and is kind; envieth not; vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, never faileth.'

"Where does amiability dwell and smile and win if not in such poetic and realised illustrations as these? 'All ye that are married, or intend to be married' to entire holiness, note these experiences:—

"Renew Thine image, Lord in me,  
Lowly and gentle may I be;  
No charms but these to Thee are dear:  
No anger may'st Thou ever find,  
No pride in my unruffled mind,  
But faith and heaven-born peace be there.

The graces of my second birth  
To me shall all be given:

And I shall do Thy will on earth,  
As angels do in heaven.

What ! never speak one evil word,  
Or rash, or idle, or unkind !  
Oh, how shall I, most gracious Lord,  
This mark of true perfection find ?

Oh, that I, as a little child,  
May follow Thee and never rest  
Till sweetly Thou hast breathed Thy mild  
And lowly mind into my breast !

Fully in my life express  
All the heights of holiness ;  
Sweetly let my spirit prove  
All the depths of humble love !

Oh, might our every work and word  
Express the tempers of our Lord,  
The nature of our Head above !  
His Spirit send into our hearts,  
Engraving on our inmost parts  
The living law of holiest love.

“ Even in ordinary Christians there is a blessed unity in the work of the Holy Spirit. The familiar passage of St. Paul to the Galatians is sadly misquoted. Even Wesley himself, with all reverence be it written, misquotes the passage, and gives us the ‘fruits of the Spirit’ instead of the ‘fruit of the Spirit.’ Said one old Somersetshire Methodist, ‘I bless the Laird, that though I beant perfect in patience, I be perfect in love.’ Not so, dear brother. If perfect in love you must be perfect in patience. ‘The fruit,’ the undivided and indivisible ‘fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.’

It is a case of 'one and all.' You cannot separate them in the everyday Christian. Entire holiness is the ripe and perfect fruitage of the Spirit. 'Where is 'unamiability' then?' 'It is excluded. By what manner of law? Of works? Nay; but by a law of faith.'

"To the law and to the testimony. One man professes entire holiness, and takes frequent opportunities of avowing his experience of the blessing. But time and again he indulges in a habit of censoriousness. He sits in the judgment-seat, not of the Scribes and Pharisees, but of the very Lord Himself. No one is right who does not conform to his standard. He will not allow one who differs from him to stand 'to his own Master.' With words that are far from amiable, he delivers his opinion of his brother to his face, with uncivil bluntness, or, worse still, behind his brother's back to a too-willing listener. Such a one may be sincere in his profession of entire holiness, but he is unquestionably mistaken, and needs to adjust his spiritual latitude.

"Another is peevish; another is impatient of contradiction; another is rash in his assertions, showing the unbridled tongue; another assumes an air of superiority over those who do not profess as much as he does; another is distantly haughty in his demeanour. Let not any, who thus display a lack of amiability in their dealings with their fellow-Christians, imagine that they are in possession of Christian perfection. Entire holiness and entire amiability the Spirit of God has 'joined together.'"

Correspondence with a large circle of friends and with his children scattered in all directions occupied much of my father's time in these closing years. I quote two or three brief extracts from his letters of that period. They are coloured with the sunset hues :—

“Wait sometimes in listening silence before God.”

“Let everything you do be not simply harmless, but, to coin a word, goodfull.”

“Account no man to be too low for Christ to raise him, even, in due time, beyond the angelhood.”

“The wounded hand smites to save, not to destroy.”

“Worried? A child of God to worry, that should never be. You believe God is your father, and as His child He will take care of you, but never worry.”

Flashes of humour, too, broke forth occasionally, side by side with sentences such as these. And sometimes gentle reproof and tender exhortation were deftly blended in a phrase which, humorous on the surface, held hidden depths of meaning.

At the close of a letter referring to a gentleman whose help and sympathy had been invaluable to me, and to many a friendly talk and pipe enjoyed together, he enquires : “How fares your circuit? Remember me kindly to your chief helper out of

your own home, who is often closeted with you for prayer, or for——?”

And now I come to the closing days. In the latter part of 1897 my father was at his best. Not for years had he seemed so cheerful. Loved and revered by all his children from their infancy, he never seemed more loveable than in these beautiful days of deepening twilight. Suddenly the after-glow faded away, and with unlooked for swiftness night fell. In December he was preparing a paper for the Nottingham Ministers' Fraternal Association, on Professor Beet's much discussed book, "The Last Things." The paper was to be given in January. At the close of the year he wrote to the Secretary of the Association to ask that the paper might be deferred for a month. He wished to have further time for studying these last things. The paper was never given. Within the month he had passed from the region of dim speculation to the fulness "of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

In the afternoon of the first Sunday of the year my father took part in the annual Covenant Service, a service peculiar to Methodism, held from the very beginnings of the Church on the first Sabbath of the year, and constituting a combined dedication and sacramental service. He had always regarded it as at once a most solemn, yet most joyous celebration. Probably, if he might have chosen for himself his last act of public ministry, he would have asked that it might close in this very manner. Certainly in no other religious ceremony could he

have so appropriately appeared for the last time as in this beautiful and impressive and peculiarly Methodist service.

This was on Sunday, January 2nd, 1898. The following day he felt he had taken a chill. Symptoms of another bronchial attack appeared. He retired early in the evening, and as he went upstairs remarked, "I shall not go downstairs again." On Thursday acute bronchitis set in. For some time he had been using in his daily devotion a collection of readings from Scripture for every day in the year, under the title "My Counsellor." On that morning the leading text was: "At midnight there was a cry made, behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." In the afternoon he called my mother to him. "If God is calling me away," he said, "by this affliction, do you think Jesus will receive me?" Then, after a pause, he added, "It is a solemn thing to go out into eternity." Little by little the disease encroached. On the Sunday evening his youngest son went in to bid him farewell. He was going up to London early the next morning for an examination. "I shall hope to see you downstairs," he remarked, "when I come back." To this there was no response, but a little later, beckoning to his daughter, "Go down and tell Bert," he whispered, "that I have just been praying for his success in his exam., and that God will open up his path before him." The next day he could hardly speak, but his thoughts were still for others. "If anything happens to me this week," he just managed to whisper,

“ Bert is on no account to be told till his exam. is over.”

On the Tuesday morning my mother opened the little book, “ My Counsellor,” to read the daily portion to him. She closed it and put it down. To read was impossible. At the top of the page stood the text, “ The Master is come, and calleth for thee.” The next day, with a sweet, grave smile, he whispered to her, “ My dear, I have been thinking about you many times to-day, but I have been thinking about Jesus a great many more.” And then night-fall came. Yet even as the darkness fell one gleam of light shot up. Speech had left him, movement ceased, but once during those last hours of mournful watching his lips parted. Stooping down over him I caught one word—“ Precious ”—(“ Unto you which believe He is precious.”) Once again opening his eyes he recognized a son who had just been ordained in the Anglican Church, and tried to utter a word of congratulation. Henceforth all was still, save for the laboured breathing and the twitchings of the brows. In the noon-day hour of Friday, January 14th, a sudden flush mounted to his face, and the trembling heart-beats, with the gentle throb of a clock run down, quietly ceased. It was indeed night now. For us the beauty and lustre of the afterglow had faded into blackness ; for him in that moment broke the glorious dawn of eternal day.

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